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Hollow victory may come to haunt Clinton

BILL CLINTON appeared virtually assured of a second four-year term as Americans went to the polls on Tuesday, *writes Martin Walker*. But despite a frantic last-minute campaign blitz, he seemed to be heading for a hollow victory, with the Republicans retaining control of Congress.

The race tightened as undecided voters, particularly in the South, appeared to plump for the 73-year-old Republican challenger Bob Dole.

The president's personal target was to achieve a moral mandate with more than 50 per cent of the popular vote, but last-minute polls suggested that the hope of a Clinton landslide had been stopped in the South.

While Mr Dole (seen right, in Iowa) completed 96 hours of non-stop campaigning in his home town of Russell, Kansas, Mr Clinton invested his final days in helping Democratic candidates in the congressional elections. If his party fails to regain both Houses it will be a personal setback and herald a difficult second term.

PHOTOGRAPH: TIMOTHY CLARY

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Army's hand seen in Bhutto sacking

Suzanne Goldenberg in Lahore

BENAZIR BHUTTO was dismissed as Pakistan's prime minister this week and her official residence in Islamabad encircled by troops. It is the second time in her turbulent political career that she has been sacked by the country's president.

Bowing to pressure from political rivals who accuse Ms Bhutto of corruption and mismanagement, President Farooq Leghari also dissolved the government and the national and provincial assemblies and called new elections for February 3.

The military, which has ruled Pakistan for 24 of its 49 years since independence, kept a low profile, but political observers said the president could not have acted without securing the approval and co-operation of the generals.

Troops moved into the capital Islamabad in the early hours to guard key installations. Army units took over the state-run radio and television stations, the telecommunications company, cabinet offices and the prime minister's secretariat. All the airports were closed.

The rumble of armoured personnel carriers could be heard at 10-second intervals on the main streets of Lahore, the seat of political power in the country and the base of Ms Bhutto's main opponent, the opposition Pakistan Muslim League leader, Nawaz Sharif.

The prime minister's spokesman said that Ms Bhutto had received a letter from the president between 1.30 and 1.45am on Tuesday at her official residence in Islamabad. Her husband and investment minister, Asif Ali Zardari, who has become a symbol of the corruption allegedly afflicting the government, was detained by soldiers in Lahore.

Meraj Khalid, one of the founders of Ms Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, was named interim prime minister. He was the speaker of the national assembly during Ms Bhutto's first government — dissolved in 1990 by the then president — and was rector of the International Islamic University in Islamabad.

Mr Khalid left politics in 1993. He was considered close to Ms Bhutto's estranged brother, Murtaza, who was shot dead by police in Karachi in September — a killing that rocked the already beleaguered government.

President Leghari, who is the supreme commander of the armed forces under the constitution, was a long-time leader of the Pakistan People's Party, and his appointment as president in 1993 had been seen as a boon for Ms Bhutto. However, he became increasingly dissatisfied with her government, accusing her of a lack of accountability, and of trampling on the independence of the judiciary. The growing friction became public in September, just days after the slaying of Ms Bhutto's brother.



Bhutto: dismissed by president

But while the president has acted on a clause of the constitution that gives him the power to dismiss a government, there can be no doubt that he has done so with the full support of the army.

Ms Bhutto may have had an inkling of what was coming. On Sunday, she had a meeting with the president and the army chief, General Jehangir Karamat. Her office released no statement after the meeting. But on the same day, Ms Bhutto made an overture to Mr Sharif for a joint effort to repeal the constitutional clause allowing presidents to dismiss prime ministers.

President Leghari had been telling confidants that the army was intent on a clean-up even if it meant the fall of the Bhutto government. Generals had drawn up a list of politicians, including Ms Bhutto and senior officials in her government, whom they wanted investigated. Gen Karamat revealed the army hit-list to the president more than a month ago. It was believed to include the leader of the opposition Muslim League, Mr Sharif, Ms Bhutto and her husband.

Mobutu spurred by Zaire conflict

Chris McGreal in Gisenyi

PRESIDENT Mobutu Sésé Séko of Zaire will soon return home after finishing treatment for cancer in Switzerland, his spokesman said on Monday, as France and Spain urged international intervention in his country.

Urgent contacts began this week between several governments over ending the conflict in eastern Zaire, after Zairean Tutsis supported by Rwandan troops captured the main border towns.

The leader of one of the main rebel factions fighting there called a ceasefire to allow aid workers to evacuate refugees.

Mr Mobutu's spokesman, Kabuya Lumuna, said the Zairean leader had prostate cancer surgery in a Swiss clinic on August 22. His therapy ended on October 30 and he would be in France briefly before flying home.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced or trapped by two weeks of fighting between Zairean troops and ethnic Banyamulenge Tutsis who took up arms after being threatened with expulsion from Zaire. Rwanda is believed to be backing the Tutsi rebels.

French President Jacques Chirac and the Spanish prime minister, José Maria Aznar, agreed at a summit in Marseille to "unite their efforts" and prepare a "temporary effort to ensure security".

"The two countries will take part in an international meeting to prepare this operation to which they are prepared to contribute and which should be decided by the UN Security Council," they declared.

France already has troops on standby who could be used to establish corridors to deliver food, tents and medical aid to a million refugees in eastern Zaire. Hundreds of tons of supplies are held at bases in nearby countries.

The French medical organisation, Médecins sans Frontières, which has been forced to withdraw volunteers from the region, called for immediate military intervention. It warned that unless rapid action was taken, thousands of refugees would die.

European Union and other Western governments were confusedly debating their reaction to the French and Spanish call. Although France appears ready to send its own forces to the region, other EU governments are ready to provide only logistical support.

Even this limited role would depend on any peacekeeping operation having the backing of the UN, Zaire, Rwanda and the Organisation of African Unity.

Laurent Kabila, leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, which has seized swaths of territory in eastern Zaire, said the ceasefire "will give [the aid agencies] security so that they can land and use the airport at Kilimba, close to Uvira, as well as in Goma, which is completely under our control".

Next year was supposed to be Mr Mobutu's year. His main accomplishment as Zaire's president since 1965 may have been to make his compatriots poorer, hungrier and more embittered, but there was every prospect that he would win an election he did not even want to hold.

That was until last month. Now Mr Mobutu is ailing in his French Riviera villa while civil war is eating away the anatomy of Zaire. He claims that only he can hold the country together.

But no one is certain how long he will live. It is one of the paradoxes of Zaire that however reviled Mr Mobutu may be by some of his compatriots, the prospect of his death

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Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Keep faith with humanitarian aid

I FEAR that Alex de Waal's passion for cold truth and his mistrust of the sentimental (Sorry St Bob, but it's time we banned aid, October 27) has finally led him to heights that are terribly barren. Perhaps it is true that aid agencies need to use publicity ploys to obtain resources. It might even be true that currently more money goes to the loud and ineffective than to the quiet and competent. However, are these reasons to withhold our humanitarian aid until someone is ready to certify what is "good work" and what is "bad"?

I agree that big humanitarian operations have often adopted overly simplistic analyses of the situations that they seek to address, but I cannot agree that this means that we should just give up. Rather, it seems to me, we should strive to do better. Some experienced aid workers may on occasion become jaded, but many more are prepared to go on trying to improve the way things are done, and sometimes some of them get a chance to do so.

Perhaps Dr de Waal is frustrated that the international community has failed to pay due attention to some of his own analyses, but I would urge him — rather than just giving up on the whole thing — to redouble his efforts to ensure that he is heard in the future.

It is certainly true that we urgently need better mechanisms to ensure the accountability of humanitarian aid, and it may be that human rights organisations, such as the one of which Dr de Waal is director, have a big role to play here. It is thus depressing to see one of the more "aid aware" human rights activists throwing in the towel. Dr de Waal's thinking and writing used to go beyond the "black or white". It has in the past often been able to illuminate the real world while remaining true to values that cherish the right to decent lives of ordinary people caught between the plans and strategies of the distant and powerful.

That he seems no longer able to do so suggests that he has either lost contact with the realities on the ground or with his heart.
Simon Mollison,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

TO SUGGEST in your heading that it's time we banned aid comes close to being an example of the media hype or disaster relief charities' commercial which Alex de Waal was discussing. Emergency aid is a complex issue, which such simplistic headings do not clarify.

The article itself is helpful in outlining some of the complexities but could have highlighted more the very helpful ("discreet, publicity-shy") aid programmes that are going on every day around the world. I've recently seen such positive projects in India, where assistance from Community Aid Abroad (Oxfam in Australia) and other agencies is bringing about real change and providing hope for many extremely disadvantaged communities.

We would be extremely hard-hearted not to respond to emergency situations, but it is being hard-headed to recognise that it is the ongoing, unglamorous, day-to-day giving which is most needed to bring about sustainable community development.
Don Gobbett
Summertown, South Australia

Belgium in trouble

THE removal of Jean-Marc Connerotte from the inquiry into the activities of Marc Dutroux and his associates (Belgian fury at child sex case sacking, October 20) sets a remarkable precedent. Your correspondent mentions a plate of spaghetti and allows us to suppose that Mr Connerotte had committed an innocent mistake. Yet the president of the *cour de cassation* explains that Mr Connerotte had not shown impartiality and that "the impartiality of magistrates is fundamental".

Mr Connerotte is indeed lacking in impartiality. He disapproves of the sexual abuse of children. That was the cause to which, on this occasion, he lent his partiality. He probably also disapproves of the murder of children. There may yet be one or two other magistrates about who are not impartial towards murder. They should all be made to stand down.

The concept of impartiality has, in the highest court in Belgium, been shifted from persons — the suspects — to principles. From now on a magistrate should not be seen to defend or uphold the law but must always express an even-handed ambivalence about it.
Charles Lock,
Professor of English Literature,
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

I WOULD like to respond to a rather misleading statement in your article on Belgium's current and recent horrors (Hercule Poirot is needed back home, September 15).

When Mr de la Guérivière talks about the "Tueurs Fous du Brabant Wallon" of the mid-eighties, he says that their aim may have been "to destabilise Belgium". This tends to suggest that they were some kind of ultra-left outfit trying to force the state into showing its true repressive colours, thereby jump-starting a popular revolutionary response. Indeed, there was in Belgium at the time a tiny group — the "Cellules Communistes Combattantes" — that was supposed to be trying to emulate its German or Italian counterparts, though it was never decisively established whether or not this small leftist cell had been infiltrated, manipulated, or conjured up by people or agencies with a quite different agenda.

But as for the Brabant killers, it was often suggested that the aim of this group with its quasi-military techniques was to "show" the dangers lurking below an affable Belgian surface, and the appalling weakness of the "security" forces, thereby engendering a move towards a more authoritarian regime.
Philippe Hunt,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Sins of omission on Nicaragua

IT WAS shocking enough that the only piece of news leading up to the Nicaraguan presidential election of October 20 was a pale piece offered by the Washington Post's Douglas Farah. I can remember back in the days of the Reagan administration, anxiously awaiting my Manchester Guardian in order to learn more of the illegal war and terror wrought upon the people of that small Central American nation.

In writing, "The Sandinistas, whose socialist regime in Nicaragua went from victory in a revolution to defeat at the ballot box . . ." Farah seems to have omitted certain facts. He would have one believe that the election of Daniel Ortega as president in 1984 never occurred.

I was in Nicaragua in November 1984, along with hundreds of other journalists and international observers from around the world. No fewer than seven parties ran in the country's election for a president. The Sandinistas had promised to hold free presidential elections within five years of their coming to power after overthrowing the dictator Somoza in 1979. And they kept their promise. With 68 per cent of the vote, and an 88 per cent voter turnout, Mr Ortega was duly elected president.

Finding a democratically chosen Mr Ortega as president unacceptable, the United States proceeded in launching a full-scale war against the Nicaraguan people. Hence the election of Violeta Chamorro in 1990 came as no surprise to those of us who have spent years trying to expose the abuse brought upon that nation by the US. By 1990, Nicaraguans understood quite well what sort of democracy the US was after: it was either the election of Mrs Chamorro, or a continuation of the contra war.

Given Nicaragua's history, I too might have voted for an Arnoldo Aleman in 1996.
Gregory Jacks,
Paris, France

Countdown to catastrophe

THANKS to Chris McGreal's clear accounts we can begin to understand the complexity of the current conflict in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. The signs of impending catastrophe were obvious from the time the authorities — UN and Zairean — allowed the Hutu refugees, particularly the rump of the Rwandan army, to retain their weapons.

Evidence of the harassment of Zairean Tutsis was apparent even before the refugees crossed the border in 1994. Furthermore, the number of returnees to Rwanda after the Rwanda Patriotic Front victory far exceeded any estimate. It was obvious then that Tutsis, who have for centuries settled in Zaire, were being forced to migrate to Rwanda. They were not considered refugees by the international community, which appeared to be more concerned about the return of Tutsi hegemony. By 1995 some observers were even beginning to question whether the genocide actually took place. A more determined effort to punish those responsible would have enabled the majority of refugees to look towards a peaceful solution — be it repatriation or settlement.

The Hutu-Tutsi problem is a regional one because these groups are not confined just to Rwanda and Burundi.

The UN appears impotent and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has been using sticking plaster when heart surgery is required. If some of the $1.4 billion spent on the flawed humanitarian effort were used to support reconstruction in Rwanda and the international tribunal, we would be witnessing more concerted attempts to promote peace.
(Dr) Patricia Daley,
Jesus College, Oxford

Briefly

THE Palestinian euphoria over the visit of French President Jacques Chirac to the West Bank and Gaza will subside as the everyday harsh reality of poor progress on peace negotiations continues. Furthermore, the devastating closure of the Palestinian territories imposed by Israel costs the West Bank and Gaza economies $3 million a day. But Chirac should at least be credited for simply stating what is an essential element to the achievement of peace in the Middle East: the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state.
Peter Kiernan,
Bir Zeit University, West Bank

FIGURES quoted in Martin Walker's "The US this week" (October 20) go to the heart of the dilemma of modern democracy. Two-thirds of American voters believe big business has too much influence in Washington. Most of the big donors to the two dominant parties say otherwise. The vast majority of voters consider that corporate greed is behind job insecurity; most big donors deny it.

What could throw into starker relief the way that Lincoln's "government of the people by the people for the people" has been replaced by government of the people by the parties for whoever can buy them?
Dion E Giles,
Fremantle, Western Australia

I SUPPOSE it's easy to criticise Mother Teresa and her co-workers — in a land where social and economic problems, along with a soaring population, make the whole scenario an absolute disaster — for not doing enough (October 27). But at least to Mother Teresa the destitute and dying are visible, worthy of recognition and love and as much help as possible. That there may be flaws in her work is no doubt true, for who among us mere mortals is perfect?
Vincent Brereton,
Liverpool

WHAT A narrow-minded view US companies have (Want a US Job? Prove You're Clean, October 6) to fire people for testing positive for drugs. Though I certainly don't condone the consumption of drugs, I agree entirely with Lewis Maltby's statement that people shouldn't be fired for what they do on their day off, especially if it doesn't affect their job performance. So much for the land of the free.
A P Fear,
Porto Alegre, Brazil

MESSRS ASHDOWN, Blair and Major pray to God. Why does God send them different messages?
Aneurin Richards,
Trecelyn, Gwent, Wales

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The Week

SAUDI ARABIAN security forces have arrested 40 people they believe were involved in the truck bombing of a US military housing complex in Dhahran in June in which 19 US air force personnel died.
Washington Post, page 16

SURGEONS in Moscow said they had successfully completed a major heart operation on the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin. The operation lasted for more than seven hours.

MORE than 300 East Timorese serving in the Indonesian army mutinied. The revolt allegedly occurred outside the capital, Dili, where the troops had gathered to bury their leader, killed in suspicious circumstances.

THE Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu threatened to resign from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission if members of the ruling ANC did not come before the tribunal to reveal any wrongdoings and seek amnesty for past human rights abuses.

A TOTAL of 41 South Korean students were handed down sentences ranging from suspended prison terms to 30 months in jail for their part in violent campus unrest in August.

THE South African state assassin Eugene de Kock was jailed for life by a judge in Pretoria who called his crimes "chilling and calculated".

GILBERTO RODRIGUEZ Orejuela, the jailed kingpin of the Cali drug cartel, has agreed to pay a $100 million fine — the biggest in Colombia — in a plea-bargain deal that could lead to his early release.

DENMARK apologised to Salman Rushdie for mishandling a visit by him to receive a European Union literary award. It was initially banned on security grounds and then rescheduled after a storm of protest.

A COURT dismissed a bail plea by the former Indian prime minister Narasimha Rao in a forgery case and gave him until next week to appeal.

SPAIN's supreme court decided on a split vote not to question or charge the former Socialist prime minister, Felipe González, in connection with a "dirty war" against Basque separatists in the mid-1980s.

NEGOTIATIONS for an anti-ballistic missile accord that Russia and the US were supposed to sign broke down, sending a troubling signal to Washington that Moscow no longer considers the US its natural strategic partner.

Serbs buck voter trend in Balkans

Julian Borger in Belgrade

PRELIMINARY results from elections on Sunday showed a significant swing against the former communists governing in Romania and Bulgaria, but Slobodan Milosevic's regime in Yugoslavia again showed itself impervious to the region's political currents and strengthened its control.

With most of the ballots counted by Tuesday, Romania's ruling Party for Social Democracy had secured only 23 per cent of the vote. The centrist and social democrat opposition now look well placed to form a coalition government.

In the parallel presidential vote, Ion Iliescu, a former communist who has run the country for the past seven years, held a five-point lead over his liberal challenger, Emil Constantinescu. He faces a second round on November 17.

Bulgaria's reformist opposition easily captured the country's presidency. Petar Stoyanov, a liberal lawyer, beat Ivan Marazov, the Socialist culture minister, by 20 points in their run-off.

The post is mainly ceremonial, and Mr Stoyanov will wield far less power than the prime minister, Zhan Videnov, a conservative former communist. But the scale of the setback will put more pressure on Mr Videnov at a time of economic crisis and doubt whether Bulgaria has sufficient foreign reserves to last the winter.

Only the Serbian president, Mr Milosevic, and his wife Mirjana Markovic, defied the trend. With more than half the votes counted, their United Left alliance of socialists and communists looked set to win a clear majority in the Yugoslav federal parliament, representing Serbia and Montenegro.

Zajedno (Together), an opposition alliance of liberals and nationalists, slumped to 23 per cent. The biggest surprise was a strong showing by the extreme Serb nationalist Vojislav Seselj, whose Radical Party, standing alone, won 18 per cent of the vote.

Together with the ex-communist ruling party in Montenegro, the Serbian left is now likely to command a two-thirds majority in the federal parliament, possibly helping Mr Milosevic to catapult himself from the Serbian to the federal presidency.

His dominance seems to have little to do with the state of the economy. Red Cross figures show that nearly a third of the population are living below the bread line, the lifting of trade sanctions has not stopped the fall in living standards, and many public-sector workers have not been paid for months.

Diplomats and political analysts attribute the scale of the Milosevic win to the ruling party's efficiency in mobilising voters, its rigid control over the state media, and the fact that the main challenger, Dragoslav Avramovic, withdrew from the Zajedno coalition, under mysterious circumstances, less than a month before the vote.

Other Zajedno leaders claim that the regime's secret police blackmailed him into pulling out.

Islamic militants await verdicts last weekend in Cairo. Three were given 25 years in jail, after a year-long trial, for their part in attacks that left 63 people dead PHOTOGRAPH ENRIC MARTI

Britain floats forum for Middle East

Ian Black

BRITAIN is proposing a new regional organisation for the Middle East which would borrow from the experience of cold war Europe to overcome distrust between former enemies.

The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, said in the United Arab Emirates on Monday that such a body could help resolve conflicts and build confidence beyond the scope of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

In a policy address designed to raise Britain's profile in the region after recent publicity-grabbing French initiatives, he suggested that an Organisation for Co-operation in the Middle East (OCME) could help reintegrate "pariahs" such as Iraq and Iran.

"Such an organisation would evolve rather than spring fully fledged into existence," he said. "An OCME would be open to all in the region to participate. Some criteria would need to be agreed, but since the purpose would be to improve co-operation and promote reconciliation, it would not make sense to be too rigid."

Non-Arab countries such as Turkey and Israel could be involved, though diplomats admitted it would be hard to establish co-operation on human rights, frontier disputes and national minorities — the sort of issues dealt with by the 53-member Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The OSCE has been widely criticised as ineffective because it can make decisions only by consensus. But it remains the only security body to include all states in Europe and link them with North America.

British officials said the United States, Jordan and Egypt had been consulted on creating a similar organisation for the Middle East.

Regional issues such as water, arms control, and economic and environmental co-operation are being discussed by Israel and the Arab states, but little progress has been made because of the sense of stalemate and crisis in the peace process.

Mr Rifkind also told his Gulf audience that Saddam Hussein had to be contained, and blamed him for blocking the long-awaited food-for-oil deals which would bring the suffering Iraqi people relief from United Nations sanctions.

"I look forward to the day when Iraq is no longer ruled by a regime which ignores international organisations and brutalises its own people. An Iraq with a government which fairly represents all the people of Iraq . . . which fully observes human rights . . . an Iraq which can rejoin the family of nations."

Seeking to distance Britain from US policy, Mr Rifkind insisted that London did not want to isolate Tehran, but he criticised its attempts to develop nuclear weapons, its support for terrorism and its continuing threat to Salman Rushdie.

On Sunday the Foreign Secretary visited Hebron, on the West Bank, during a one-day tour of Israel and the Palestinian territories. "Hebron has become crucial to whether there is a future for the peace process," he told reporters after meeting the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu. "Without Hebron it is rhetoric."

He told the mayor of Hebron: "The British government believes all Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are illegal, and that they should not continue . . . We believe the possibility of a Palestinian state cannot be excluded."

● The Israeli government has announced proposals to build two Jewish cities in the West Bank, bringing 100,000 more settlers to the disputed area.

The project, the brainchild of the infrastructures minister Ariel Sharon, has not yet been approved by Mr Netanyahu, who knows such a large-scale scheme could completely scuttle the deadlocked peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

A Palestinian Authority member, Haidar Abdel Shafi, said on Monday that the proposals were "a call to war", and warned that Palestinians would not stand by as Israel settled their land.

If built, the two cities would nearly double the Jewish settler population, which now stands at 145,000, and make it more difficult for Palestinians to establish a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where 2 million of them live.

An army of children fight adult wars

Victoria Brittain

A QUARTER of a million children, some as young as seven, are serving in government armies and armed opposition groups around the world, according to Swedish Save the Children Fund.

In a report published last week, it revealed that child soldiers fought in 33 wars last year and had been used as executioners, assassins, spies and informers. Based on research in 26 countries, the report shows that children were often given drugs and alcohol before fighting. In Liberia, Sri Lanka and Burma, children were seen throwing themselves into assaults "as though they were immortal or impervious".

Children carried out executions in Burma, Colombia, Honduras, Liberia, Mozambique, Peru and Uganda, and others as young as 10 were used as assassins in Sri Lanka.

The report says children in Peru were induced to cut the throats of those found guilty by people's courts and to eat the entrails and drink the blood of executed rebels. In Colombia, boys and girls aged 12 and 13 were executed in front of their peers, who were then forced to drink their blood.

Brutalisation of recruits was standard, often involving the torture or death of relatives in front of them. A child captured by Renamo in Mozambique and trained as a soldier reported that "in captivity, my father was used as a target during the final tests of boys who were being trained".

In Uganda, most child soldiers had been ordered to torture, maim or kill children or adults attempting to escape. In El Salvador, Burma, Cambodia, Liberia and Ethiopia, children were used as spies or informers in front-line missions. Many were caught and killed.

The findings form part of a two-year United Nations study, Children and War, headed by Graca Machel, the widow of the former president of Mozambique. The study will be presented to the UN General Assembly later this month.

A campaign to curb the use of child soldiers culminates in Geneva in January, when the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child will be revised to make 18 the minimum legal age for combatants.

China quick to put away dissident

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

TAKING less than four hours to judge evidence flimsy even by Chinese show trial standards, a Beijing court last week handed down an 11-year sentence against Wang Dan, a former Tiananmen Square student leader who has spent much of his adult life in custody or on the run.

Mr Wang, aged 27, was found guilty of plotting to "subvert the government", a charge based largely on selected and sometimes doctored quotations from articles he wrote for newspapers in Hong Kong and Taiwan after his release from jail in 1993.

He was detained again last year and held incommunicado for 17 months as authorities struggled to stitch together a case.

Among the allegedly subversive statements cited in the Beijing Intermediate People's Court was an assertion by Mr Wang that "freedom of speech under the constitution has become an empty phrase". The prosecution claimed this was false. A guilty verdict in political cases is a foregone conclusion.

Mr Wang's father criticised the trial as hasty and unreasonable. He said his son would appeal. All such appeals fail.

The judgment sent shivers through Hong Kong, which reverts to Chinese rule in July 1997 under a Beijing-drafted constitution that bans "subversion". Governor Chris Patten said there would be "very considerable concern . . . about a sentence imposed on a young man for activities which in most places, including Hong Kong, would be entirely legal".

It will also disconcert President Bill Clinton, who has been eager to improve ties with China. The US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, is due in Beijing this month.

Mr Wang's closed trial extinguishes the last embers of China's tiny dissident movement, completing a cycle of repression that has seen a prominent literary critic, a Nobel prize nominee and a host of other outspoken Chinese jailed or exiled.

"This represents the nadir of China's judicial system in dealing with dissidents," said Robin Munro of Human Rights Watch Asia. "There is no discernible legal ground for these proceedings. The only reason for this trial is that Wang Dan annoys the government and they are determined to silence him."

The state-run media hailed the trial as open and fair. "Wang candidly confessed his activities," the Xinhua news agency said.

Foreign journalists were barred from the courtroom. Police clamped a security cordon around the building and confiscated the film of at least two foreign camera crews.

Mr Wang was jailed for four years for his involvement in the 1989 protests and released on parole a few months before completing the sentence. He had initiated "democracy salons" at Beijing University, and became one of the movement's three principal leaders, along with Chai Ling and Wuerkaxi, both of whom fled to the US.



Wang Dan, pictured in 1989, was given 11 years for subversion

Washington Post, page 15



A Russian sailor standing on a ship's guns in Sevastopol, Ukraine, puts up flags to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the formation of the Black Sea fleet PHOTOGRAPH: OLEG GARAN...

Right to food sticks in the West's throat

John Hooper in Rome

THIS month's World Food Summit is close to becoming something many a bureaucrat must dream of — an international conference incapable of generating controversy because every issue has been settled in advance.

Delegates and officials met last week at the headquarters of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome for what they hoped would be their last negotiations on the final declaration. The summit begins next week.

It has long been the practice at international conferences for officials to negotiate the bulk of an agreement in advance. However, in most cases, the thorniest problems have waited for the conference itself, and for an injection of the political will only ministers were thought able to deliver.

At two of the UN's most recent high-level, high-profile summits — the population conference in Cairo in 1994 and the women's conference in Beijing last year — the wording of the final declaration was not agreed until hours before the closing formalities.

The FAO has gone all-out to avoid this. The text of the food summit's final declaration should have been agreed even earlier. But despite an all-night session, some passages remained in dispute. Sources said the main obstacle was whether the document should back a "right" or merely "access" to food for all.

According to the FAO, more than 800 million people worldwide face chronic undernourishment. It expects conditions to improve, but predicts that unless action is taken there will still be 680 million chronically undernourished in 2010.

The international community, through the UN, is ostensibly committed to the idea that people have a right to be free from hunger and malnutrition. But some Western governments are understood to fear legal action if they agree that their citizens enjoy a right to food itself.

The biggest dispute resolved ahead of the summit concerned trade. The United States and most other developed nations want Third World countries to allow freer trade in agricultural goods. But the poorer states, and many aid organisations, argue that free trade cannot be fair while governments in the developed world give their farmers huge subsidies.

An official said that only three disputed phrases concerning trade remained in the document. The key issue of liberalisation had been resolved with a reference to "fair and market-oriented" commerce.

During the preparatory negotiations, Roman Catholic anti-abortionists objected to an undertaking to help the world's poor by promoting "reproductive health advice". The phrase was removed from the text, though there remained a commitment to promote "reproductive health services" consistent with the Cairo declaration.

By resolving every possible dispute in advance of the conference, the FAO is hoping to focus attention on its central purpose. This is defined as being the renewal of a "high-level commitment around the world to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, and to the achievement of lasting food security for all".

Food aid from rich to poor nations has almost halved over the past three years, but the FAO will not be seeking pledges of more.

Conflict spurs Mobutu's return

continued from page 1

has sent a shudder through the country.

The tremors have been strengthened in recent weeks by stunning advances in eastern Zaire by rebels who have seized two provincial capitals and several other towns.

The rebellion has set off renewed secessionist rumblings in other parts of Zaire. Insurgents have vowed to carry the war in the east to Shaba province in the south, where the government brutally suppressed an uprising with UN help shortly after independence. That has spawned a pledge by others to fight on behalf of Mr Mobutu.

The prospect of a widening civil war has helped arouse the spectre of a military coup which almost no one but the army would want. Earlier this year, tens of thousands of people marched through the capital demanding an end to Mr Mobutu's rule. Now the popular hope is that he survives long enough for a smooth transition.

When rumours of Mr Mobutu's death ran through Kinshasa last month, thousands left the streets and took shelter in their homes. The central market emptied in minutes. People knew what to expect if it was true: almost certainly the army would take it as an excuse to rampage and loot.

One of Mr Mobutu's bitter rivals, the former prime minister Etienne Tshisekedi, said he was praying the president would not die soon. Few would have imagined it after what Mr Mobutu has done to his people. Zaire is not suffering a minor mechanical fault. The country has been dismantled and carried off. All that remains is the bodywork, and now that is falling apart.

The treasury coffers emptied years ago as Mr Mobutu fashioned a country where it was all but impossible for most people to survive without squeezing every opportunity to make money. Civil servants on salaries of just $1 a month have not been paid for most of this year. The result is a breakdown of infrastructure and central government.

The disintegration has spawned de facto city states in which ordinary people have been forced to take charge of everything from justice to education. The central province of Kasai refuses to accept the new national currency and has its own monetary system.

Seven prime ministers have come and gone since the transition began. More than 400 political parties are expected to register for next year's elections in a country which six years ago was a one-party state. In such political chaos, Mr Mobutu's portrayal of himself as the single cohesive force in Zaire gave him a shot at victory in presidential elections planned for next year.

Part of his strength has been his utter contempt for his opponents. When things were looking difficult for him three years ago, he was asked why he did not take his vast fortune and retire to the south of France. He replied that he had thought about it, but considered others so unworthy of power that he enjoyed keeping them at bay.

Additional reporting by Paul Webster in Paris and John Palmer in Brussels

Cleopatra's trysting place

MARINE archaeologists have rediscovered and mapped the outlines of the sunken royal quarter of ancient Alexandria, scene of the drama between Cleopatra, Mark Antony and the Caesars.

Franck Goddio, president of the European Institute of Marine Archaeology in Paris, told a news conference last weekend that the findings of his team of 16 divers overthrew old theories based on classical descriptions of the city.

"The exact topography of the vanished royal city can be identified for the first time . . . from now on, the accurate maps resulting from this mission will form the basis for all future archaeological work in this zone," the institute's statement said.

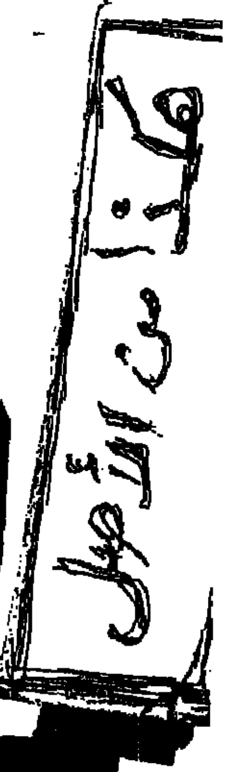
Alexandria was built for Alexander the Great from the late fourth century BC. The Ptolemies, a dynasty founded by one of his generals, ruled Egypt from the city until the Roman invasion and it remained the capital until the Arab conquest in the seventh century AD.

"Mr Goddio has answered many questions for us but he has raised many new ones too," Aziza Said, professor of classical archaeology at Alexandria university, said.

Mr Goddio said his mainly French divers had made 3,500 dives in a period of four months, pinpointing quays, pavements, fallen columns and ancient statues, using a satellite-based global positioning system.

They located what is probably the island of Antirrhodos, described by the Greek geographer Strabo as the site of the royal palace, and cast new light on possible sites of Timonium, where Mark Antony committed suicide in 30 BC.

The only vestiges of the royal quarter have been lying 6-7m underwater since a big earthquake and tidal wave changed the coastline in AD 335. — *Reuter*



Post-election sniping ends NZ calm

Giles Wilson in Wellington

A STRANGE stillness has come over the New Zealand political scene after months of frantic campaigning while secret negotiations take place between the parties attempting to stitch together a coalition.

Winston Peters, the leader of the nationalist New Zealand First party, which has held the balance of power since the general election on October 12, is talking with the National and Labour parties on alternate days.

The decision on whether the country continues to be ruled by the National caretaker prime minister, Jim Bolger, or has its first woman prime minister in the Labour leader, Helen Clark, still seems to be in his hands.

The uneasy post-election ceasefire almost came to an end last week when Mr Bolger announced that he would attend the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum summit in Manila this month unless a government had been formed, infuriating Ms Clark. She claimed he had no authority to attend the meeting.

One possible indication of who might form the next government came when Ms Clark and Mr Peters announced that their parties would jointly fight planned increases in state housing rents. Mr Peters admitted the issue had been discussed in the coalition negotiations with Labour, which are normally kept secret.

Ms Clark said they would request a full report from the acting housing minister. Further action could be taken by the two parties, she said.

The announcement indicated that the two parties, which have spent the past three years separately attacking the National Party, have more in common than New Zealand First has with Labour's rival.

Mr Peters will be relieved that the agenda has returned to policy, having spent most of last week in the spotlight for other reasons.

After discussions late on Tuesday night, he and some colleagues, including Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, Mike Moore, gatecrashed the opening of a Wellington bar. After 2am, and obviously in very high spirits, he got into an argument with the editor of the New Zealand Press Association, which some reports said led to a scuffle.

Mr Peters was then involved in a confrontation with a woman guest in which, she said, he told her she would be ugly in 10 years' time. His group was repeatedly asked to leave the bar.

When asked about the events, Mr Peters displayed his knack for evasion, saying: "The day that you can't go to a restaurant without being insulted by a media person is a parlous day in New Zealand politics."

However, his failure to attend coalition talks with the National Party the next morning, which surprised even his own staff, led to queries about whether his late-night lifestyle was appropriate for the man whose say would determine the government's future.

Old comrade returns to fray in Zaire

Jean-Pierre Langellier

THE WAR in Kivu brings back to the political scene a veteran of Zairean political life, Laurent Kabila, who has been forgotten for years. He is now presenting himself as the co-ordinator of the new Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

His reappearance evokes memories of a Zaire of another time — that of the civil war of the 1960s. Mr Kabila is a disciple of Pierre Mulele, an apostle of revolutionary subversion. After having led a guerrilla struggle in the region of Kwilu, in the midwest of the country, Mulele was tortured to death in Kinshasa in October 1968 by President Mobutu Sese Seko's officers, shortly after returning from exile.

Like Mulele and the other "Marxist" leader, Antoine Gizenga, Mr Kabila takes his inspiration from Patrice Lumumba, the former prime minister who was assassinated in January 1961.

After President Mobutu's seizure of power in November 1965, order was re-established more or less completely throughout the country. The opposition leaders either went into exile or were won over.

Only Kabila and his People's Revolutionary Party withdrew to the mountains above Lake Tanganyika. There, between April and December 1965, he received support from the prestigious guerrilla leader "Che" Guevara, who fought alongside 200 Cuban soldiers.

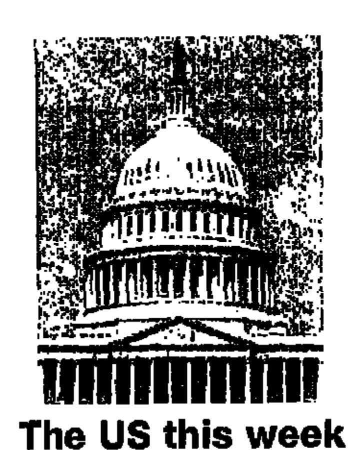
The legend has it that Che left for Africa with, as hand luggage, an attaché case stuffed with books and inhalers (he suffered from acute asthma). During the return flight to Cuba he had to hide his face behind a book to avoid being recognised by an old admirer.

At Kivu, the guerrilla warfare of Mr Kabila soon wilted: the guerrillas turned into peasants. Mr Kabila reappeared now and again, notably in September 1982 when he took part with Antoine Gizenga in a sitting of the "Permanent Peoples Court" held in Rotterdam. But he was remarkably absent from the work of the National Conference of 1991, which followed the abolition of the single-party state.

It remains to be seen why this individual, now aged nearly 60, has reappeared. He is not a Banyamulenge Tutsi. Has he stepped forward at the instigation of a Rwandan regime wanting to give a wider support base to a purely ethnic rebellion?

One thing, however, is certain: Mr Kabila nurses fierce hatred towards Zaire's president, whom he has always held to be an impostor. — *Le Monde*

Clinton's run of luck set to end



The US this week

Martin Walker

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas: As Bill Clinton headed home to Arkansas for election night, confident of a triumphant re-election, a curious sense of disillusion — almost of depression — was beginning to grip his staff. They know that re-election does not presage any great shift to the left by the American electorate, nor any promise of a bright new future for the Democratic party. In fact, an ugly political season now looms.

The essential fact of 1996 is that this has been the first American election year to combine peace and prosperity since 1928. When the economy boomed, there was always the shadow of the cold war. When the threat of war was absent, in 1932, 1936 and again in 1992, the economy was in a trough. That is the fundamental reason for the deceptively easy cruise to re-election of the most flawed president since Nixon. Throw in the incompetence of the Republican campaign and the harsh rhetoric of the Republican Congress, and Slick Willie barely had to break sweat.

But this is not how the political runes are being read by the two parties and their main lobby groups. The Democrats are increasingly convinced that Clinton has put together an enduring new political coalition, adding suburban women to the traditional Democratic base of the unions and the cities. This, after all, is what will be required to make his political legacy enduring, as Franklin Roosevelt did by assembling a coalition that kept the Democrats dominant for a generation. One part of that is to ensure the succession of Vice-President Al Gore, another centrist and moderniser. Another is to nail down for the Democrats the allegiance of the group of voters Clinton has courted most relentlessly — women.

Flanked by businesswomen, introduced to his campaign rallies by women candidates, played to the podium by all-girl bands, and cheered by women as he unveils the latest promise to invest federal funds in breast cancer research, for this last campaign Clinton has gone a-wooing for the female vote.

Women make up 52 per cent of the US population and 54 per cent of registered voters, and Clinton currently leads his Republican rival Dole among female voters by the awesome margin of 31 per cent. That is not enough for the Prince Charming of US politics. The thrust of the last week of the campaign has been to widen that lead not just for this election, but to consolidate the women's vote for the Democratic party for elections to come. Accordingly, the Clinton campaign is reaching beyond the usual female issues of abortion rights, child care and women's health, to make the Democrats into the party of the burgeoning new class of women entrepreneurs.

"When Bill Clinton was running for president last time, I was on welfare, going from door to door to try and get some cleaning work," said Anita Bycraft-Walker, a black woman whose cleaning company has earned $500,000 this year and now employs 26 people. "I couldn't do it on my own. I was helped, with small business loans from the community development corporation," she said as she introduced the president at a rally in Michigan last week.

She was followed by Congresswoman Lynn Rivers, who had two children by the time she was 19, and then put herself through college by selling Tupperware and babysitting, while her husband worked at the local Ford factory. When the Clinton campaign takes hold of a theme, they pursue it to the end. No sooner had the congresswoman sat down than a small, elderly, brown-skinned woman rose to speak.

"I arrived in America from Mexico when I was 12, speaking only six words of English," said Irma Elder, whose chain of Ford dealerships had sales of more than $100 million last year. "I went to school, public school, went to college — on a scholarship — and people helped me. America helped me. The government helped me. It can help you too, if we re-elect Bill Clinton."

For a president with a reputation as a ladies' man, there is a touch of risk to this strategy. But the electoral prize is enormous, and Clinton's body language has accordingly been drilled into a kind of deferential intimacy with the women he meets in public. He towers over them, leans down to hear their voices while keeping his body well back, and takes their hands gently in both of his. Whatever their ages, he appears to treat women in public as if they were much revered and rather delicate grandmothers.

The determined courtship of women voters is playing to Clinton's strength, reinforcing his appeal to the fashionable new category of "Soccer Moms", who are said to hold the electoral fate of the country in their hands when they get time off from driving their kids to soccer practice. If there is one thing that makes the Clinton camp nervous, it is the fear that women voters may be too busy or too bored to turn out on election day.

The big question is whether the women will stay, once the Republicans learn to avoid the mistakes of pandering to the Religious Right on abortion, vowing to abolish the Department of Education, and threatening to so dismantle the Medicare system for the aged that the Soccer Moms fear they will have to turn the garage into a granny flat.

The other question is how the traditional Democrats will handle Clinton's success. The unions, in particular, are feeling strong again. Thanks to the growth of the health-care industry and local government employees, union membership is rising for the first time since the 1950s. And under the new leadership of the AFL-CIO chief, John Sweeney, the unions have started playing intelligent politics. They put together a $35 million fighting fund, and they used it brilliantly, spending it all in 65 marginal congressional seats. In the state of Maine, they are spending almost $1 million to defeat a Republican, more money than Maine has seen spent on a single campaign before. The unions reckon they are now owed big favours.



The Republicans, by contrast, reckon they have been cheated by a smooth-talking operator, by a biased liberal media and by Bob Dole's rotten campaign. They have yet to confront the sobering fact that the traditional secret weapon of conservatism — tax cuts — failed to work its usual magic.

Indeed, the claims for the credit of saving the Republican party from the awful fate of Bob Dole have already begun. "The Religious Right vote will act as a firewall that will prevent what is clearly a poor Republican presidential performance from turning into a meltdown," Ralph Reed, director of the Christian Coalition, boasted last week. "We will play the essential role in enabling Republicans to retain control of both Houses of Congress."

In short, while Clinton is winning re-election by colonising the centre ground of politics, both Democratic and Republican parties have seen their own zealots — Christian Coalition on the one hand, unions on the other — increasingly ascendant within the party machines.

Among the Democrats, this tendency will be reinforced if they do manage to regain control of the House of Representatives (at the time of writing the Senate seemed to be slipping out of their reach). Even a Democratic majority of one will give them the right to appoint the powerful chairmen of the various congressional committees. This would create three extraordinarily powerful black politicians: Ron Dellums would become chairman of the Armed Services Committee; Charles Rangel would become chairman of the virtually omnipotent Ways and Means Committee, which writes all the tax bills; and John Conyers would take over the Judiciary Committee, which would mean that Clinton could forget about the embarrassing inquiries into the various scandals that still dog him.

For Clinton, that would be some compensation for a Democratic Congress that would be much further to the left — and far more determined to cut defence spending and restore the welfare system — than he is. The first clash between Clinton and the Democrats in Congress will come very soon, when the White House forwards the proposal early next year to admit Chile into the North American Free Trade Agreement.

CLINTON appears to be heading into some very choppy political waters, with Democrats and Republicans increasingly polarised. Moreover, the next four years can hardly be as peaceful and prosperous as those Clinton has enjoyed so far. The economy is starting to slow, and commodity prices are rising, even if they have not yet shown up in the retail inflation figures. This recovery is now nearly six years old, and at some point in the next year or two it is likely to slip back into at least a mild recession. That is the moment when the unions will be calling in favours from the Democratic congressmen they elected.

Inside the White House, they are assuming that life will get very ugly very fast. Doug Sosnik, the political director, has already warned the president that his post-election honeymoon will probably end with the planned victory press conference this Thursday. "I am not looking forward to it at all," said Mike McCurry, Clinton's press secretary. "The press has already written that we have won. Victory has been discounted, so if we don't get a big enough vote to carry the Congress as well, they'll say we failed."

The Republicans are in mean and vengeful mood. The internal war between their social conservatives and their economic conservatives has begun. It already has a target. After his limp performance as a vice-presidential candidate, Jack Kemp can forget any hopes of nomination in 2000. Insiders in the Republican National Committee are already dividing between the governor of Texas, George Bush Junior, and California's attorney-general, Dan Lundgren, with a dwindling number of bets on retired general Colin Powell.

The one thing that brings Republicans together is a loathing for Clinton. So if they keep a majority in either house of Congress, they will launch swift committee hearings into the latest embarrassment of the Asian connection; the questionable and possibly illegal donations from Indonesian, Taiwanese and South Korean sources. The press will eagerly co-operate, having been denied any chance to question the president on these matters in the final days of the campaign.

The moment when the renewed Clinton presidency goes back into a state of siege may come even sooner, at the Asia-Pacific economic summit in the Philippines in later this month. Because of the Indonesian fund-raisers, the photograph of President Clinton greeting Indonesia's President Suharto will provoke a blizzard of commentaries about Clinton buying the election at the expense of human rights in East Timor.

In a second term, a president's power starts to erode very fast. Usually, he can expect a honeymoon period with the press and the public, a certain amount of deference from Congress, and considerable loyalty from his party. Clinton is unlikely to benefit from any of this. His second term will look like the grimmer parts of the first, with battles of attrition in Congress, more digging into scandal, a truculent media, and possibly some Whitewater indictments. For Clinton, the best is over. The campaign was the honeymoon.

Washington Post, page 15
Larry Elliott, page 24

Leader who roused a Tiger

Junius Jayawardene

JUNIUS Richard Jayawardene, who has died at the age of 90, was prime minister of Sri Lanka from 1977 to 1978, and president from 1978 to 1988. During his term of office the Tamil separatist movement developed from sporadic acts of violence into a full-scale civil war. Yet Jayawardene was a devout Buddhist who was also deeply influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, including non-violence.

He claimed to be a man of peace, with a genuine respect for democracy. Yet he turned the first country in south Asia to enjoy full adult suffrage into a virtual one-party state.

Born into the highest echelons of what was then a very stratified society Jayawardene attended the Law School at Colombo university, but chose to enter politics. Before independence he rose rapidly in the Ceylon National Congress. After independence he joined the United National Party, whose aim was to represent moderate opinion and to bring about a consensus between the three main communities — Tamils, Sinhalese Buddhists, and Christians.

But tension arose between the majority Sinhalese Buddhists and the Tamils over language and education policies. Jayawardene opposed a pact between the prime minister and the Tamils' leader and headed a march to Kandy, capital of the former Sinhalese kings and a city sacred to Buddhists. The



Jayawardene: devout Buddhist

Tamils were never to forget that march and the communal violence which broke out in 1958 as a result of the turmoil created by Jayawardene's opposition to the pact with the Tamils. Many historians believe this was the beginning of the resolute refusal of the Sinhalese to countenance any form of federalism.

Jayawardene remained the UNP's chief strategist both in and out of office but he only became the leader after electoral defeat in 1970. He came to power in 1977 with a massive majority. He devalued the rupee and scrapped controls on foreign investment. Unfortunately his policies revived inflation and led to unpopular cuts in Sri Lanka's generous welfare provisions. Within three years there was a general strike. Jayawardene called out the army and let loose his party stormtroopers.

Claiming that reforming Sri Lanka's economy needed strong government, he altered the constitution and was elected the first executive president. But the economic revolution ran out of steam and Jayawardene found himself embroiled in the Tamil insurgency.

The turning point came on July 23, 1983, when Tamil Tiger separatists killed 13 Sri Lanka soldiers. The next day when the bodies were brought back to Colombo to be cremated Tamil property was attacked.

Jayawardene did not impose a curfew for more than 24 hours. It was four days before the president spoke publicly, and then he justified the killing of Tamils by saying it was a natural reaction by the Sri Lankans to attempts to divide their country. That was taken as an encouragement to riot, and the violence erupted again on what has come to be known as Black Friday.

Jayawardene opted for a military solution but never had any chance of success. In 1987 he had to accept the humiliation of allowing the Indian army to take charge of the war against the Tamil Tigers.

The next year he meekly accepted the limitation of two terms imposed by the constitution he had introduced, retired, and from then on scrupulously avoided any involvement in politics.

Mark Tully

Junius Richard Jayawardene, politician, born September 17, 1906; died November 1, 1996

Emperor of atrocities

Jean-Bedel Bokassa

JEAN-Bedel Bokassa, who has died of a heart attack at the age of 75, was one of the most notorious figures of modern African history. He took over the Central African Republic in 1966, declared himself Emperor in 1977, and managed to hold on to the title until French troops deposed him in 1979. In the course of his rise to be what was in effect Africa's "last emperor" he was responsible for much brutality.

As emperor, he drew world opprobrium for ordering the killing of schoolchildren who had been jailed for protesting at the compulsory wearing of school uniforms made in factories he owned.

Bokassa was born in Bobangui in the Lobaye District of what was then Oubangui-Chari, one of the poorest Francophone colonies where timber and rubber companies held brutal sway. He enlisted in the French colonial army at the age of 18 in May 1939.

When he left the army in 1961, the Territory of Oubangui-Chari had already become independent as the Central African Republic, and President David Dacko called on Bokassa to help form the infant army. He rose to become head of Dacko's military cabinet and then, in 1964, chief of general staff. But by July 1965 he had been sent in semi-disgrace to Paris.

It is said that the "coup of St Sylvestre" (December 31, 1965) was engineered by the French because of Dacko's incompetent and increasingly unpopular rule, but was not intended to bring Bokassa to power.

In 1966 he inherited a country already on the brink of bankruptcy, and left it in similar condition in 1979. Megalomania increasingly took over. In 1974 he made himself Life-President and in 1975 Marshal, in the manner of Napoleon, who was the model when he proclaimed himself Emperor in December 1977.

The cynicism of the French towards Bokassa haunts this period and illuminates France's post-colonial sphere of influence. While Bokassa was on a visit to Libya, the French moved paratroops into Bangui in September 1979. There was no resistance, but also no jubilation at such a neo-colonial humiliation. The country has appeared to be remotely controlled from Paris ever since.

Bokassa went into exile in Côte d'Ivoire where he proved an embarrassing and indiscreet guest until he fled to France. But he became increasingly homesick and eventually walked on to a Bangui-bound plane in Brussels in October 1986. He was immediately arrested and put on trial for murder and embezzlement.

He was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death by firing squad but his sentence was commuted to forced labour for life. He was released in 1993.

Kaye Whiteman

Jean-Bedel Bokassa, army officer and politician, born February 22, 1921; died November 3, 1996

Plot to rob cash dispensers put banking system at risk

Luke Harding and Christopher Elliott

A CONSPIRACY to steal hundreds of millions of pounds from cash machines was mounted by an élite team of criminals, it emerged this week. The plan, had it succeeded, would have crippled the British banking system.

One of those involved was Kenneth Noye, who killed a policeman in 1985. He is on the run — believed to be in Russia — wanted over the road rage murder last May on the M25 of Stephen Cameron.

On Monday, seven conspirators admitted at Southwark crown court, south London, their part in a plot which would have undermined the public's confidence in cash dispensers, it was claimed.

Ann Curnow QC, prosecuting, said: "Had the conspiracy succeeded, the banking system of this country would have been put at risk."

The plan was discovered when a computer expert the gang tried to recruit went to the police. Police believe it could have been the biggest theft in British history.

The seven are: John Lloyd, aged 57, of West Kingsdown, Kent; Paul Kidd, 36, of Meopham, Kent; Graham Moore, 32, of Erith, Kent; Stephen Seton, 65, of Chislehurst, Kent; Stephen Moore, 41, of Leytonstone, East London; William Haward of Yalding, Kent; and John Maguire, 36, of Mottingham, Kent.

Judge Geoffrey Rivlin QC adjourned sentence until December. The seven admitted conspiracy to steal cash from banks, building societies and financial institutions between January 1, 1995 and July 25, 1995. They face a maximum of seven years in jail.

The gang intended to recruit corrupt British Telecom employees to tap into the lines that run between cash dispensers and the main banking computers, the court was told. Confidential information would have been downloaded and used to make bogus cards.

Massive security surrounded the case, with police marksmen stationed around the court.

Both Lloyd and Noye were suspects in the £26 million Brinks-Mat gold bullion robbery in 1983. It was while undercover detectives were searching Noye's Kent mansion for stolen gold that he stabbed to death Detective Constable John Fordham.

Noye, now 52, admitted stabbing the detective 10 times after confronting him in a garden at night, but said he acted in self defence. He was acquitted of murder and manslaughter in 1986. Noye disappeared hours after the killing of Mr Cameron.

After the Brinks-Mat robbery, Lloyd left the country. But, Miss Curnow said, when Lloyd returned to Britain in the late 1980s the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute him.

The court heard that the conspiracy was foiled when computer expert Martin Grant, recruited by the gang while serving 16 years for attempting to murder his wife and her child, confessed to a prison chaplain. He then made a statement to Scotland Yard detectives. The police raided Haward's home and found five conspirators, including Lloyd and Haward.

The judge said: "Police found computer hardware and software designed to encode plastic credit cards with what purports to be relevant account details of literally tens of thousands of personal bank account holders."

Mythical 'new man' hard at work but not at home

David Brindle

THE cult of the "new man" has been exposed as a myth by research showing that middle-class fathers say they are doing more at home, but are actually doing less.

Fathers' increasingly long working hours — rather than the rise of the working mother — is the main cause of the blight on family life in the nineties, the study suggests.

More than one in four earning fathers is putting in more than 50 hours a week at work and almost one in 10 more than 60. Such men are markedly less likely to help with child care.

However, the study of some 6,000 parents aged 33 shows that the below-average family contribution of middle-class men cannot be explained purely by length of working hours. Irrespective of hours worked, the report says, "the most highly-educated men, particularly graduates, played relatively little part in the care of their children".

The research, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, was carried out by Elsa Ferri and Kate Smith of the social statistics research unit at City university, London. It was based on the National Child Development Study, which is tracking all people born in one week in 1958.

The findings come from a survey of these people in 1991. It takes years for researchers to sift through such data. They, therefore, take no account of continuing growth since then of many men's working hours, job insecurity and other aspects of the "flexible" labour market.

Whether mothers worked made little difference to family cohesiveness, as measured by joint activities such as meals. Much more significant was the effect of long hours worked by the father: as hours rose, so the mother became more likely to be solely responsible for child care and the number of joint family activities declined.

The report, Parenting In The 1990s, speculates that, at the age of 33, middle-class fathers are concentrating on career development at the expense of family life. It notes, though, that shared parenting emerged as most common among couples both in full-time work, a group where qualifications and occupational class were highest.

"These apparently conflicting patterns would seem to point to particular tensions for such parents in reconciling the responsibilities of employment and family life," says the report, published by the Family Policy Studies Centre.

The researchers call for more family-friendly employment practices and improved child-care provision.

@Steve Bell 1996—

The Week In Britain James Lewis

No apologies, no regrets

TEN YEARS after caning was effectively banned from Britain's state schools, the Education Secretary, Mrs Gillian Shephard, provoked another internal Tory row when she told a radio interviewer that, in her opinion, corporal punishment could be a "useful deterrent to bad behaviour in school". She was speedily rebuked by the Prime Minister and, although the exchange was private, it was interpreted in newspaper headlines as "Major Gives Gillian Six of the Best".

Later, in the Commons, Mrs Shephard made no attempt to hide her dispute with Mr Major, saying she had expressed her personal view, which was different from that of the Prime Minister. Her new Education Bill, published the following day, contained no reference to the cane, but the subject was suddenly back on the agenda.

Newspapers promptly commissioned opinion polls which found large majorities of parents — 68 per cent in one poll, 72 per cent in another — in favour of bringing back the cane. Rightwingers complained that Mr Major was once again "out of step with public opinion" in refusing to back corporal punishment. But they overlooked the fact that a return to the cane would provoke another conflict with the European Court of Human Rights.

The whole affair was an example of the moral panic which has arisen from isolated incidents — the stabbing to death of a headmaster and an outbreak of trouble at two state schools (*see page 9*) — which hardly add up to evidence that violent and disruptive youngsters are tearing apart the fabric of society.

But the silliness will continue. David Shaw, the Tory MP for Dover, is planning to table an amendment to the Education Bill requiring governors of state schools to lay down a dress code for their staff, to ban "unprofessional" items such as jeans and earrings.

LABOUR and the Liberal Democrats embarked on the biggest exercise in cross-party co-operation for 20 years when they agreed to join forces to discuss a joint approach to constitutional reform.

Robin Cook, Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, and Robert Maclennan, the Lib-Dems' constitutional spokesman, strenuously denied that the move was intended to lead to a pact, though the Tories swiftly claimed it was.

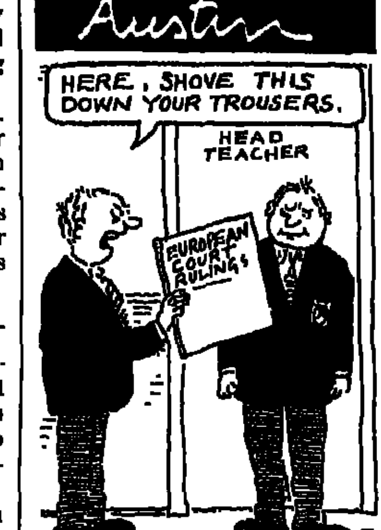
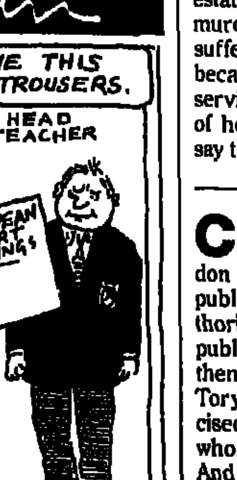
High on the agenda will be discussions on an overhaul of Commons procedures to smooth the passage of measures, approved by both parties, to allow Scottish and Welsh devolution, regional government for England, reform of the House of Lords, a Bill of Rights, and a Freedom of Information Act.

FOUR police officers, who claimed they were mentally traumatised after rescuing fans at the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster, in which 96 people died, won their right to compensation in the Court of Appeal. By a two to one majority, the appeal judges overturned an earlier High Court ruling that the men were not entitled to damages for post-traumatic stress disorder because they were "bystanders", not rescuers, and were not acting beyond the call of duty.

The decision angered families of the victims, most of whom have had compensation claims turned down either because they were not on the scene of the Sheffield disaster, or not related closely enough to the victim.

The ruling will also rekindle demands for reform of the law on psychiatric injury, which the Law Commission has criticised as "unnecessarily restrictive".

In another compensation case, eight former soldiers served writs on the Ministry of Defence, claiming that they were beaten and sexually abused while training in Staffordshire in the early 1990s. They claim at least £100,000 each in compensation.

RUTH NEAVE, a drug-abuser accused of strangling her six-year-old son, Rikki, was cleared of his murder but jailed for seven years after admitting cruelty. Mr Justice Popplewell said he had rarely come across a case of "such systematic and such persistent cruelty to young children", and there were demands for an inquiry into the handling of the case by the Cambridgeshire social services team which had the boy on its "at risk" register but failed to heed countless warning signs.

The court heard that Ms Neave had squirted washing-up liquid down Rikki's throat; turned the boy out of the house wearing only pyjamas in the early hours of a December morning when he was only three; sent him out at night for drugs; and had threatened to kill him unless social workers agreed to take him into care. He was eventually found dead in woods near his home, strangled with his own anorak.

Ms Neave's abuse of Rikki was not secret, nor was it carried out behind locked doors on the rundown estate near Peterborough. After his murder, horrific tales of what he suffered at the hands of his mother became evident and, although social services say they were never aware of her worst excesses, neighbours say they reported them.

COUNCIL tenants convicted of antisocial behaviour in the London borough of Wandsworth face public humiliation if the local authority goes ahead with a threat to publish their names and distribute them to local newspapers. But the Tory-controlled council was criticised for needlessly vilifying those whom it had already prosecuted. And one local paper said it would not print the names unless the council paid for them to be published.

In Brief

THE 30-year Westminster career of former minister Sir Nicholas Scott is in tatters after a vote of no confidence by his local party officials saw him lose the first, critical round in his battle to retain the safe Tory seat of Kensington and Chelsea.

THE Government's Commons majority has been reduced to one after the combative MP, Barry Porter, lost a battle against cancer and died aged 57.

BRITAIN needs a Human Rights Commission to monitor abuses and help promote a sea-change in political, social, and administrative culture, the Constitution Unit concludes.

EDITORS who pay prospective witnesses in criminal trials for their stories and witnesses who make such deals could face jail under proposals to strengthen sanctions against chequebook journalism.

DIANE BLOOD, the widow battling to have her dead husband's baby, may be artificially inseminated abroad with his sperm after a move by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to reconsider its ban on the export of semen.

THE number of Aids deaths fell last year from 1,336 in 1994 to 1,231 in 1995. Total deaths from Aids in the 10 years from 1986 was 8,376.

THE draft Labour party manifesto was given a landslide vote of endorsement by the party's rank-and-file membership, leaving Tory chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney, to denounce it as "an Albanian plebiscite".

NADIA ZEKRA, a Palestinian woman charged with planting the car bomb that exploded outside the Israeli embassy in London in July 1994, was acquitted after an Old Bailey judge pointed to "serious inconsistencies" in identification evidence.

THE Government is under renewed pressure to review fireworks legislation after two men died and once was badly hurt over the weekend. Import controls on fireworks were lifted in 1993, since when injuries have risen from 1,000 a year to 1,500.

AUSTRALIA is the first country Britons would visit if money were no object. In practice, Spain and Greece remain the top choices, according to a survey for British travel agents.

FYONA Campbell, who entered the Guinness Book of Records after her 11-year walk around the world, admitted that she cheated and hitched a lift on the American leg of the journey. She is now insisting her name be removed from the record books.

Plans for the centrepiece of the millennium celebrations in Greenwich were unfolded last week. The huge dome, designed by Richard Rogers Partnership, will be 50m high and 320m in diameter — big enough to hold two Wembley stadiums or 13 Albert halls

Dorrell wins £500m for NHS

Ewen MacAskill and Michael White

HEALTH Secretary Stephen Dorrell on Monday appeared to have won his battle to secure more money from the Treasury, securing about half the figure he was seeking.

With predictions of an NHS cash crisis this winter, Mr Dorrell has held firm in his demands. Reports predicted he will win £500 million for his department after warning of ward closures and cancelled operations unless the Treasury relented.

But Mr Dorrell's gain will be a loss for another department. With education such a sensitive issue in the run-up to the next election, transport and defence may well be the victims.

The urgent need for more NHS cash was spelled out by Philip Hunt, director of the National Association of Heath Authorities and Trusts, whose members face hospital deficits totalling £200-300 million this year. "There is a hell of a lot riding on this Cabinet decision because we are in danger of slipping back on much of the progress we have made recently in reducing waiting times, expanding primary care and making ourselves very efficient," he said.

Labour and Liberal Democrat spokesmen piled in to endorse warnings of "a real funding crisis".

This year's annual public spending round is expected to be more difficult than most because of the closeness of the next election.

To make way for tax cuts demanded by the Tory right, the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, needs tough departmental limits. But they cannot be too tight. As every opinion poll shows, most voters would not be happy with cuts in health or education, especially after the row over standards in schools over the past few weeks. They also want tough crime measures, which cost money.

In last year's Budget, Mr Clarke set a total departmental spending target of £268.2 billion for 1997-98. Now he wants to cut up to £4 billion from it, probably less, to permit 1p or 2p cuts in income tax without panicking the City. It does not allow him to be generous to education and health, unless other departments suffer badly.

Mr Dorrell is fighting for an extra £1 billion to stave off a winter of ward closures and other cutbacks, not the best curtain-raiser to a general election. But with Labour making the running on classroom sizes, standards and discipline, ministers cannot be seen to squeeze too hard on education.

Meanwhile the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, needs an extra £100 million to cope with the rising number of prisoners.

More money is needed too to meet Mr Major's Tory party conference promise last year of 5,000 extra policemen on the beat within three years. There are only 1,000 so far.

Peter Lilley has avoided swingeing cuts to his Social Security department — by a long way the biggest spender — by reducing the numbers entitled to benefit rather than cutting the cash value of individual payments.

Defence appears to be a soft target for cutbacks, especially since the end of the cold war, but it is a difficult area for the Tories.

Assaults on staff close Halifax school

Martin Wainwright and Donald MacLeod

THE efforts of the Education Secretary, inspectors, the local education authority and teachers to restore order at the Ridings in Halifax blew up in their faces last week as the school was closed after a near-riot and assaults on teachers.

In the first shutdown of its kind for 20 years, Calderdale education officials abruptly closed the 600-pupil comprehensive school on Thursday last week to secure the safety of the children and staff.

This week prospects for a peaceful reopening of the school improved when Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the teachers' union at the centre of the strike action, promised to co-operate to make the school a success.

Mr de Gruchy said he would be seeking a positive relationship with the new head, Peter Clark, when children returned to the school on Wednesday.

Two days of concentrated disruption last week led by a core of 12 pupils had coincided with an emergency inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, ordered by Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary. Damage, verbal abuse and refusal to obey teachers' instructions culminated in the flinging of books at a male staff member and the pinching of a female teacher's bottom.

Headteacher Karen Stansfield and her deputy resigned a month ago following a long-running row over teaching and expulsions.

Pupils later mounted a "Sort Out the Yobs" protest. A score of teenagers took over the entrance steps in Halifax — previously the preserve of gangs flicking V-signs at staff — to back their harassed teachers and unfurl a banner saying: "We need our education — support the innocent."

Mr Clark, who took over on temporary secondment from Rastrick high school, near Halifax, backed the call for positive thinking about his troubled new charge: "We have to build up the morale of the whole school community," he said.

"I appeal to everyone to take this opportunity of a second chance to get the Ridings off the front page of every newspaper for negative things and on to the front page for successful things."

Local education authority leaders are seeking an urgent meeting with the Press Complaints Commission after allegations that the recent intense media coverage of disciplinary problems at schools had encouraged bad behaviour and may have put children at risk.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities was told at its annual education conference in Salford over the weekend that journalists had paid children up to £150 to perform for the cameras at the Ridings school, exacerbating the disorder which led to its closure.

Meanwhile hopes of reopening Manton Junior School in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, hung in the balance after the resignation of Eileen Bennett, chair of the governing body which has been in dispute with the headteacher and staff over a disruptive 10-year-old boy.

Mrs Bennett and two parent governors, who had backed Matthew Wilson's mother by insisting on his return to normal classes, resigned before a meeting with parents last week.

Members of staff have voted to strike if asked to teach Matthew and headteacher Bill Skelley has closed the school because he could not guarantee the safety of the 194 pupils.

Call for Nolan sleaze inquiry

David Hencke

LABOUR last week urged Lord Nolan to launch a "cash for contracts" investigation in the wake of the Guardian's disclosure that the former defence minister, Sir Archie Hamilton, is being paid by three companies to tell them how to approach ministers over government business.

Derek Foster, the Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in a speech to Ministry of Defence staff in Bournemouth, said: "Tighter regulation and more effective scrutiny of the governing process is absolutely essential to deal with conflicts of interest arising as a result of too cosy a relationship between government and business."

Highlighting the role of Sir Archie, who has been appointed by the Government to sit on the Commons standards and privileges committee investigating the "cash for questions" scandal, Mr Foster said that the fact he had broken no rules suggested it was time to look again at parliamentary reform.

The committee's inquiry will examine allegations against former disgraced minister Neil Hamilton, and lobbyist Ian Greer, and their relationship with the owner of Harrods, Mohamed Al Fayed.

Mr Foster pointed out that one of the companies Sir Archie represents, W S Atkins, was paid £11 million by the Government to take PSA Building Management off its hands. He said: "Most of PSA's work was for the MoD, coincidentally the department where Hamilton spent 10 years as a minister.

"How can anyone have faith in a government that lets MPs like Neil Hamilton abuse the system and then nominates MPs like Sir Archie Hamilton to mend the system?"

Meanwhile David Willetts, the government minister caught in the centre of the "cash for questions" scandal, was given a special briefing from the Government chief whip, Alastair Goodlad, and his Whitehall fixer Murdo MacLean, to prepare for a televised parliamentary hearing this month.

Alan Milburn, a Labour frontbencher, said: "I find this staggering. Until there is an explanation to the contrary, the assumption must be that the powers that be are trying to help Mr Willetts out of his little local difficulty. It seems they are at it again."

New powers in crime fight

Alan Travis

EVERY job applicant in Britain will have to provide proof of a crime-free record under powers unveiled by the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, last week.

The Police Bill will give all employers — not just those involved in work with children or the vulnerable — the right to demand to know the criminal record of job applicants. This great extension of official vetting is expected to result in 8 million checks a year.

The publication of the scheme came as the Home Office said that the Government had decided to adopt proposals to prosecute in domestic courts British tourists who sexually abused children abroad. Until last week, ministers had decided to leave such measures to a private member's bill.

The decision to press ahead with the vetting scheme led to concerns that up to 5 million people with a criminal past could be excluded from the labour market. The requirements will come into force within 18 months.

Penal reformers said it was reasonable to allow full vetting of those working with children, but giving any employer the right to inquire into past convictions was excessive.

Job seekers will have to pay a new Criminal Records Agency between £5 and £15 to get a "criminal conviction certificate" giving details of their past from the Police National Computer.

The new vetting agency will not be opposed by Labour, which welcomed its impact on the private security industry. But the human rights organisation, Liberty, voiced serious concern.

"The criminal records certificates will risk condemning people to a lifetime of unemployment because of one criminal conviction which may bear no relevance to their ability to do their job," John Wadham, Liberty's director, said.

The new Police Bill was published at the same time as Mr Howard's gun control legislation to ban all handguns except for 40,000 .22 target pistols to be held in licensed, secure gun clubs.

Owners of the 160,000 larger calibre handguns will have to surrender their weapons to the police.

The bill also envisages total compensation of up to £50 million, based on the market value of each weapon before October 16 — the day Mr Howard announced the partial ban in the Commons.

Licensed firearms dealers will also be compensated for any stocks of banned weapons they wish to surrender. Illegal possession of a banned handgun will carry a maximum penalty of 10 years' jail, as will possession of a .22 handgun outside a licensed gun club.

The chances of Labour and the Liberal Democrats forcing through a complete ban with the support of some rebel Tories suffered a setback when the Ulster Unionists made clear they would not back a 100 per cent prohibition. The arithmetic, however, remains tight as it appears likely that the nine Official Unionists will abstain on the key vote.

But the Tory MP Robert Hughes, who is campaigning for the prohibition of all handguns, said he would table an amendment to the Bill at a later stage seeking such a ban.

● On Monday two former Tory home secretaries dealt a blow to Mr Howard's law and order legislation in a dual attack on his "prison works" policy.

In an astonishing Commons ambush, Mr Howard's two predecessors, Douglas Hurd and Kenneth Baker, accused him of treating law and order as "a race for votes" and warned that his US-style minimum sentences plan would succeed only in turning out more accomplished criminals.

Their attack indicates that Mr Howard faces real difficulties in getting his bill on to the statute book before a May election.

Comment, page 12

Chief constable Ronnie Flanagan foresees the police fighting terrorism in Northern Ireland for five more years PHOTO KELVIN BOYES

New RUC head warns of dangerous times ahead

David Sharrock

IT WAS a bad summer for Ronnie Flanagan, held largely responsible for the Drumcree stand-off and the worst civil unrest for years, but as he took over as the Royal Ulster Constabulary's new chief constable this week the signs are he faces an even worse winter.

At 47 he has 27 years' RUC service, during which nearly 300 fellow officers were killed and more than 9,000 injured.

Before the IRA declared its 1994 ceasefire, Interpol rated Northern Ireland as the world's most dangerous place to be a policeman. The signs, according to his own assessment, are that the danger is returning: "The immediate prospect is rather dangerous and gloomy," he said. The IRA's recent twin bomb attack, without warning, on the Army's Ulster headquarters meant a return to war, even if this time there may be a different emphasis.

"The worrying thing for us in the coming weeks and months is that we will see other attacks carried out, even if the leaders of the republican movement seek to carry them out in a way they would see as attempting to restrict to carefully approved 'high-impact' targets."

If Northern Ireland returns to the bad old days, the RUC will resume its role of holding the security ring while waiting for the next round of ceasefires and talks. He foresees the RUC having to fight terrorism for a further five years.

He has a reputation for sensitive policing in difficult circumstances but it is clear that the new chief constable was chosen to perform deeper tasks. The recent peace gave the RUC time to consider a return to normality. Mr Flanagan oversaw a Fundamental Review, which confidentially suggested cutting the force by more than half.

With only 7 per cent of officers from the Catholic community, Mr Flanagan is also committed to addressing the religious imbalance.

"The major barrier has been the terrorist threat to them. But we have to work towards providing an environment where men and women of any religious belief or political persuasion don't have to submerge those beliefs or persuasions and where above all the service that the police provide is absolutely free of any bias."

Mr Flanagan knows more officers on first name terms than anybody else in the force. He was born into a protestant working-class family in north Belfast. His father was a shipyard worker and the family ethos was socialist and avowedly non-sectarian, moulded by his grandfather's active support of the defunct Northern Ireland Labour Party.

● The IRA's supreme ruling body is believed to have met at the weekend at a secret location in the Irish republic to decide its future strategy.

The Irish prime minister, John Bruton, said the IRA's use of violence to remove British rule from Ireland is undergoing a "serious rethink". Although he was not aware of an IRA convention having taken place, he said: "What we do know, however, is that there is a serious rethinking going on within the republican movement."

Further curbs on unions put forward

Michael White

SHOP stewards and other voluntary union officials should no longer be entitled to perform union duties during working hours, according to a draft of the Government's forthcoming green paper on industrial relations.

The draft, leaked to the Trades Union Congress, also proposes to abolish traditional union rights to information about company performance for the purposes of collective bargaining.

It goes well beyond the series of hints dropped by ministers since they decided to curb strikes deemed to have a "disproportionate or excessive effect" on employers and the public. Despite this year's disputes, strikes are still at an historic low — 94 per cent below 1970s levels.

Options such as compulsory arbitration and a ban on strikes in specific industries such as public transport monopolies have been rejected in the draft, which is dated October 28. But it allows for claims for damages where the effect of a strike may be seen as disproportionate to the grievance.

Seumas Milne adds: The outline of a deal to settle the six-month pay and working practices dispute in the Post Office has already been negotiated, it emerged, after postal workers delivered a powerful new mandate for further strikes.

Alan Johnson, Communication workers' Union joint general secretary, revealed immediately after a vote in favour of strikes that he and other union leaders restarted talks with Royal Mail last month with proposals he hoped would make the strike vote academic.

EMU 'threat to pensions'

EVERY man, woman and child in Britain could be forced to subsidise £20,000 worth of pension liabilities in other European Union states if Britain joins a single currency on the present terms, political leaders were told last week, *writes Michael White.*

In a report condemned as alarmist by ministers and the European Commission, the Labour MP Frank Field led the all-party Commons Social Services Select Committee in warning that pensions could be a national asset in danger of being frittered away.

The committee says: "As the UK's outstanding public pensions liabilities are substantially below those of other EU members, there would be a risk that if the UK joined a single currency, British taxpayers could be called upon to help finance the pay-as-you-go pension obligations of other EMU members."

Treasury ministers insisted a "no bail-out" clause in the Maastricht treaty prevents any country subsidising another's debt, a claim reinforced by Germany's proposed "stability pact" against reckless spending.

Eurosceptics, including John Redwood and the Bruges Group, piled in to back the report.

Britain has £600 billion worth of pension rights which are fully financed by contributions against only £230 billion worth of pay-as-you-go pension commitments to public sector employees, the report says.

That adds up to a far bigger pensions pot than the rest of the EU put together, most of whose pension commitments to future retirees are unfunded and therefore will be paid for by taxation. Some experts last week claimed the sums total £10,000 billion throughout Europe.

Fowler's relaxes slang rules

John Ezard

RULES of correct English which have stood for 70 years are relaxed in a new edition of Fowler's English Usage due out this week.

In a radical revision of the standard reference book, its new editor Robert Burchfield is tolerant about modern slang forms of grammar and usage which his predecessors would have denounced as wrong or sloppy.

The new edition — the first full revision since 1926 — will add to the row over standards of writing and speech. It ran into immediate criticism from the Campaign for Real Education and the Queen's English Society.

The society accused its publishers, Oxford University Press, of contributing to "the slide into verbal anarchy".

Among common criticised habits the New Fowler's Modern English Usage* refuses to forbid or discourage are use of:

- ❑ refute or rebut to mean deny
- ❑ "like" as a conjunction, as in "Nobody told me I would feel like I do"
- ❑ dangling participles, as in the satirist Richard Ingrams's remark about his birthplace: "Now demolished, I can call it to mind in detail".

Nick Honey, chairman of the Campaign for Better Education, opposed all three changes. "The word 'like' is slang," he said. "It should not be used that way in careful speech or writing."

*Published by OUP, £16.99



Healey warns of EU currency riots

Michael White

LABOUR'S last Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Healey, last week launched a remarkable attack on a single European currency, warning that it could lead to riots in the streets.

The outburst overshadowed the debate taking place in the Commons where the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and Gordon Brown, his Labour shadow, were trading blows over the credibility of the economic recovery in the wake of last week's quarter-point interest rate rise.

Lord Healey, speaking on the single currency, told the House of Lords: "If the thing goes ahead, it will be a disaster economically and politically, because the social strains created by the fight between the Central Bank and the national governments to try to return to the type of convergence which was originally intended will produce riots on the streets, as they already have in France, and certainly demonstrations, as they are doing now in Germany."

His intervention came as the Labour leadership tries to maintain a unified stance on the issue.

On the final day of this year's Queen Speech debate in the Commons, Mr Brown tore into the Chancellor for the Government's failure to tackle the "fundamental weaknesses" in the economy, which rendered Britain uniquely vulnerable to interest rate rises because the recovery had not been investment-led.

Mr Clarke hit back, accusing Labour of having no policies and of being the only people in the country — apart from those who are "either mad or dead" — of not recognising the strength of the recovery.

Meanwhile Lord Healey's broadside showed that at the age of 79 he is still one of the cleverest men in the business as well as one of the most boisterous bulls in a very posh china shop.

It was ever thus. The man who battled as Labour's chancellor in the seventies' oil crisis has rarely been able to resist candour — it cost him the party leadership in 1980.

The incident was vintage Healey. So too is the awkward fact that he put up a formidable case: that the argument for European economic and monetary union is economic, not political, and that Germany's internal monetary union, when Helmut Kohl reunited his divided country in 1990, shows how huge the necessary sacrifices are — even for "a single people and a single state under a single leader".

Lord Healey said it had cost West Germany £400 billion — between 3 and 4 per cent of gross domestic product — to make unification work, 85 per cent of Germans still felt worse off, and 15 per cent of former East Germans were still jobless.

Europe's disparities were just as great as Germany's in 1990, he said. Already the pressure of the Maastricht criteria — low inflation, low borrowing, stable interest rates — had inflicted what the Financial Times called "a dismal level of economic performance" on Paris and Bonn. To meet the criteria, all but tiny states like Luxembourg and Ireland would have to "fiddle the figures".

A German-speaker with excellent German contacts, what Mr Healey did was to point out that many significant EU players now "fear disaster" if Mr Kohl insists on the 1999 timetable — that it will "divide Europe, not unite it".

Martin Woollacott, page 12

'Victorian' Birt under MPs' attack

Andrew Culf

JOHN BIRT, the BBC's director general, was attacked last week for a Victorian approach to management, as MPs renewed their criticism of changes to the World Service.

Members of the foreign affairs select committee, which in July accused Mr Birt of taking a "cavalier" approach, expressed doubts about guarantees designed to protect the quality of the service.

Mr Birt admitted he had learned lessons from the bruising encounters over the World Service, and hoped a closer relationship would be forged with the Foreign Office. But he warned that the service could face a £40 million funding gap over five years and appealed for its grant to be fixed in a five-year, above-inflation deal.

During the hearing, Mr Birt and Sam Younger, the World Service's managing director, defended the merger of the service's news and English language production with the BBC's domestic departments.

Michael Jopling, Conservative MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, said the way the restructuring had been handled raised questions about the competence of the BBC. Mr Younger and Bob Phillis, deputy director general and chief executive of BBC Worldwide, had been told just 24 hours before the public.

Mr Birt said all large companies would have handled a big restructuring in the same way when careers and senior jobs were involved, but Mr Jopling told him: "This attitude — that it was typical of the way big organisations are run — has caused a great deal of hilarity . . . It is a kind of Victorian approach." It would have been common courtesy to have shared the details with Mr Younger and Mr Phillis.

David Sumberg, Tory MP for Bury South, said the safeguards, agreed by a BBC/Foreign Office working party, could be meaningless because Mr Birt would still have the final say. "In the end, criticisms of you will land back on your desk. It is going round in circles."

The World Service is faced with a £5 million shortfall for 1997/98, despite making economies of £6.5 million. If the Government does not increase its grant-in-aid in this month's budget up to six foreign language services are likely to be closed, Mr Younger warned.

Catastrophe reigns in Zaire

THE HUGE dimensions of the Zairean catastrophe can be gauged by simply considering the latest request from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. In one sense it is modest enough: it asks for the minimum that would be required to rescue hundreds of thousands of refugees from a desperate situation. Yet in the light of the current action in the Great Lakes region — and the lack of action in the United Nations or anywhere else — it may also be regarded as asking for the moon.

Perhaps half a million refugees in eastern Zaire, Rwandan Hutus who fled after the massacre of 1994, are now heading further west into Zaire, pushed by the ethnic Tutsi rebels who are supported by the Rwandan army. Ms Ogata has called for a "return corridor" to lure the refugees not just back to the camps but across into Rwanda. She admits that trying to convince the refugees to return will require enormous efforts, but she says that the drift westwards will further destabilise Zaire. She is right on both counts.

On Monday the Tutsi rebels declared a ceasefire to allow, so they said, the refugees to move home in safety. Even if this offer does not break down under Zairean counter-attack, this is the very move which the refugees have resisted making, under less threatening conditions, over the past two years. As many aid agencies now argue, the only safe route will be one where safety is assured by an intervening force. Enter the French with tentative wider European support for the "restoration of security" to underpin a humanitarian operation in eastern Zaire. This proposal unfortunately evokes the French safe haven set up in Rwanda two years ago, widely seen as offering tacit support to the defeated Hutu government that had been responsible for the massacres. Any repeat intervention under the flag of one or a few nations risks being viewed with similar suspicion: by reinstating the Hutu camps it would have the effect of perpetuating the original problem. The only chance of effective intervention would be on a much wider scale with strong guarantees for security, and substantial subsidies to persuade Rwanda to relocate the refugees free from fear of reprisal.

Enter the Security Council? Hardly on its performance so far. This is precisely the kind of issue that the secretary-general should have defined last month as a "threat to peace", requiring the Council to convene in emergency session until decisions were made. Instead there has been one desultory resolution calling for a ceasefire: the first call for a special sitting was made only on Monday by Germany. Waiting for Tuesday's US election is one reason why the Council has sat on its hands. There may only be a slim chance of getting action from the Organisation of African Unity summit in Nairobi. It is further diminished if the perception is that the UN intervenes in Europe or Asia — but leaves Africa to its misery.

Bid for the big telecoms bucks

BRITISH TELECOM'S proposed merger with the US telecommunications group, MCI, is riddled with potential pitfalls — financial, political, cultural and electronic. But that's no reason not to welcome BT's bold bid for a big stake in the exploding world of global communications. This is a war on several fronts in which timidity won't be the winner. The world's telephone, wireless and cable companies are battling it out to become the dominant conveyors of information, while media giants such as Disney, Viacom, Microsoft and Rupert Murdoch's empire are themselves restructuring to become the dominant suppliers of entertainment and software. This is happening against a worldwide push — led by the US and the UK — to deregulate markets. In the background the Internet — the world-wide computer network — is growing strongly and becoming so versatile that it is no longer fanciful to think that it may one day become the main medium for television and (voice) telephone calls as well as computer-led communications.

One of the ironies of the information revolution is that though in the long run it offers unprecedented empowerment of the individual, in the short run it is a battle between the national telecommunications giants for control of international traffic. In the short term this war will be dominated by globally positioned "triad" players with strong bases in the US, European and Asian markets. If BT and MCI merge to form Concert they will be two-thirds of the way towards this ideal. What remains to be seen is whether such a company fades away into near-oblivion (as happened to British Leyland) or whether it develops into a Glaxo, the UK-owned pharmaceutical company that is now the biggest in the world. BT comes from a new genre of companies, such as British Airways and British Steel, that have used a strong (and, interestingly, nationalised) home base to convert into successful global players.

But BT first has to disprove the academic research showing that mergers are rarely successful. A merged BT-MCI will also have to face unexpected technological changes (most likely from the Internet) and a potential clash of corporate cultures between the go-getting *nouveau riche* Americans and the *ancien régime* of BT executives who, though learning fast, were reared in a protected domestic market.

One likely winner from all this (apart from shareholders) is the consumer, who faces falling prices as the cartellisation of international tariffs — particularly on the continent of Europe — is shattered by the onward march of deregulation and globalisation. But if we are to ensure that prices really do fall and that taxes don't get conjured away Murdoch-like into offshore tax havens, we must think how national regulators can be turned into international ones. If cyberspace turns into a virtual tax haven dominated by international monopolies then the information revolution will have failed even before it has seriously got under way.

Time to give them all a free vote

HIS HANDS are up, but he's still not thrown away all his guns. Hence he's in trouble with cabinet colleagues, his party and the country. Michael Howard, the personification of populism, is not just personally unpopular but is dragging his party down. So much for his aspirations of leading the Conservatives when Major goes. Last week's Mori poll in the Times showed law 'n' order had for the first time become top of the public's list of most important issues — with the Labour lead in public confidence in what was once such a strong vote-winning Tory issue rising dramatically. Last month's Gallup showed Labour nine points ahead of the Conservatives in public confidence in handling crime. The Mori showed Labour 25 points ahead in tackling violence, banning combat knives and promoting good citizenship.

Rarely can a politician have lost so much ground. His attempts to wrong-foot Labour through tricky parliamentary procedures over a record five law 'n' order bills in this session have disastrously — and deservedly — back-fired. The public was rightly outraged by the Home Secretary's initial move to leave the paedophile and stalking bills to private members' measures, and they are equally unimpressed by his procrastination over knife controls. But most serious of all has been his refusal to ban all handguns. The publication of his Firearms (Amendment) Bill last week left the Conservative party divided but the vast majority of the public united in opposition.

Mr Howard's bill would greatly strengthen firearms controls. But the Dunblane Snowdrop campaign is right to insist that it is not enough. Some 40,000 .22 calibre pistols would still exist and this number would grow as gun-owners received up to £50 million in compensation for the handguns they had handed in.

The Home Secretary is silly to talk of a total ban driving current handgun owners underground — the police already have the names and addresses of every licensed handgun owner and will know who has not handed in their weapons. A total ban on handguns would still allow sports enthusiasts to go to rifle or shotgun clubs if they want to.

There is a more obvious reason why the Home Secretary is being short-sighted in not permitting Parliament a free vote on the issue. He had hoped to fight the coming election on Labour being soft on crime. Yet for all his hardline rhetoric, he remains the minister who is resisting proper controls over knives and handguns. No wonder Labour is smiling. Mr Howard faces the worst of all possible positions: persisting with his partial ban but losing it in an ignominious parliamentary reverse. Why doesn't he make a virtue of his political plight by covering up a surrender with a magnanimous offer of a free vote. He'll never be a hero, but he could make himself less of a villain.

Honesty a casualty in the rush for union

Martin Woollacott

A GERMAN magazine cover in 1990 showed Helmut Kohl at the wheel of a speeding racing car, with Lothar de Maziere, the East German leader, crouched petrified in the passenger seat. Mr Kohl is driving breakneck toward a finish line called unification. Substitute a less petrified Chirac for Mr de Maziere, some would say, and the picture is the same in 1996, with the whole of Europe being pulled along behind the German chancellor.

European monetary union is not being approached in the careful and studied manner that Germans, above all, have always said was necessary. Criticisms by Denis Healey, the former British chancellor of the exchequer, of Mr Kohl underline how much all Europeans are dependent on this unpredictable and intuitive man. In 1989 and 1990 he determined that the objective of German unification should override all other considerations, including the doubts of allies, the anxieties of the West German central bank, and the worries of West German citizens. Slow down to take account of these, he implied, and the prize might be lost. The problems, whatever they might be, could be dealt with afterwards.

Now, in 1996, his attitude is the same. The objective of European union justifies breaking, or at least bending, the rules. Obstacles are there to be overcome. Mr Kohl chose to spend K-Day — on October 31 he became the longest serving chancellor since Bismarck — in Japan. The trip was arranged some time ago but, as it happens, it helps him distance himself from the difficulties within his coalition government from the admission of Theo Waigel, his finance minister, in emergency parliamentary debate, that the 1997 deficit will be worse than previously admitted, and from the conclusion of some of the country's most respected economists that Germany is not going to be able to meet the economic criteria laid down for monetary union.

But the government waves aside the difficulties. Meanwhile Germans watch disconsolately as their government pares the welfare state, and as management and unions confront each other on wages and benefits.

Between western and eastern Germany a divide yawns. The two resent each other and, in spite of the vast amounts of money poured in, some of it European as well as German, the east's economy still falters.

Yet the gloominess of the public mood, and the doubts about monetary union so consistently reflected in polls should not mislead. Germans may be reluctant to give up the mark, but they regard monetary union as inevitable, and since it has to come, they trust Mr Kohl more than any other possible leader to get them though it.

The failures in the east have to be seen in context. If the former East Germany thinks itself a "colony" now, how much more that would have been the case had Mr Kohl not offered the generous currency deal, the high wage rates and the large subsidies that he did, and which gave him a smashing victory in the first elections? And, since that was done, it can hardly be a surprise that the former East Germany has the worst economic record of all the countries in eastern Europe. But sooner or later the vast investment in the east will begin to pay off, and then the complaints will dwindle away.

Mr Kohl's instincts on East Germany were right, even if the price is still being paid. But the question raised by Mr Healey and others is whether the hell-for-leather approach that worked for German unification can work, on a vastly larger scale, for Europe. It is not only a question of practicability but of democracy and of consent across a wider Europe. Increasingly, the German government seems to think just in terms of those who will be inside the first phase of monetary union. It is increasingly uninterested in efforts to decide what the future relationship between the ins and the outs will be.

It also seems uninterested in trying to think through, ahead of time, mechanisms to deal with the social and economic disruptions that a single currency will cause, as some regions advance and others decline. There is apparent a philosophy that everything can be left until afterwards. That is likely to be interpreted as meaning that Germany and France will make key decisions alone, and will negotiate bilaterally with countries who cannot or do not wish to join the first time round.

The readiness of the German government to abridge and modify conditions earlier presented as critically important has encouraged others to follow suit. The French, notoriously, have met Maastricht conditions by counting as income money paid over for their government assuming pension obligations. This is a move which gives credit now for future debt, at a time when the unfunded pensions obligations of European governments are already awesomely large.

YET BRUSSELS has approved it, for Brussels too is in the grip of the political imperative. No official or commissioner wants to stand in the way of monetary union, and decisions are undoubtedly being made that ought not, on strict principle, to be made. Other countries, as Lord Healey says, will be tempted to follow France in juggling their books.

There are broader doubts about the wisdom of monetary union as conceived by politicians who believe that growth can be restored by completing the single market with a single currency, and by cutting the labour costs of industry and the welfare costs of governments. The dangers of this process are already abundantly clear. For a high social price, a small return in competitiveness is achieved, leading on to demands for deeper cuts, which in turn lead to only small further "improvements". Perhaps Europeans will be prepared to consider more fundamental changes only when monetary union has been achieved and has demonstrably not delivered what was promised in terms of prosperity.

In the meantime what is worrying about the new "flexibility" in Germany and France is not that the strict conditions on convergence are socially damaging but that standards of honesty are being abandoned, as well as the traditions of deep administrative preparation for change.

French minister 'spied for KGB'

Le Monde Reporters

CHARLES HERNU, François Mitterrand's first defence minister and longtime friend, who was forced to resign in 1985 following the sinking of the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour, has been accused by the French weekly L'Express of having worked for the Bulgarian, Romanian and Soviet secret services during the 1950s and 1960s.

L'Express bases its accusations against Hernu, now dead, on documents obtained from Romanian secret service files, and also on interviews conducted with his former Soviet bloc "contacts".

Jacques Fournet, head of the counter-espionage service (DST) from 1990 to 1993, confirmed to Le Monde that he informed Mitterrand in 1992 that former Romanian intelligence officers had handed over to him a file on Hernu. Investigations by Le Monde show the DST carried out its own investigations and concluded that the information was authentic.

Introducing the report written by two journalists from L'Express, Jérôme Dupuis and Jean-Marie Pontaut, the weekly's editor, Denis Jeambar, said: "Charles Hernu was a spy in the service of the East 30 years ago, and nobody can say whether his past influenced his ac-[illegible]"

"First Pelat, now Hernu. . ." was apparently Mitterrand's reaction when Fournet broke the news to him in the autumn of 1992 ("Pelat" is a reference to Patrice Pelat, another close friend of Mitterrand's, who died of a heart attack while investigations were under way into allegations of insider trading.)

Fournet says Mitterrand advised him to say nothing about the matter: "We're not going to rewrite history. Consider this to be a state secret, director."

L'Express claims the information about Hernu reveals him to have been a paid informer of the Soviet bloc secret services and shows that he was apparently not acting out of any ideological convictions. However, the file, which the DST maintains is authentic, says nothing about Hernu's behaviour once he became defence minister. Those details, according to L' Express, are probably locked away in the former KGB's vaults in Moscow.

The Bulgarian secret service reportedly recruited Hernu in 1953, when he was 29 and active in left-wing politics. His Bulgarian contact was probably Raiko Nikolov, a secretary at the Bulgarian embassy in Paris. Nikolov gave Hernu the code name "André", and paid him a monthly retainer equal to about Fr2,750 today ($540) with occasional payments of Fr4,000 to Fr5,000 for apparently innocuous reports on the political situation in France, or even assessments of Mitterrand and Gaston Defferre (who later became interior minister under Mitterrand).

In fact, says L'Express, Nikolov was acting as a recruiting agent for the Soviet secret service. A few [illegible] National Assembly in 1956, Hernu came under the control of a Soviet agent, Vladimir Ivanovich Yerofeyev, a counsellor at the Soviet embassy in Paris, described by L'Express as an important figure in his country's secret service.

Still using the cover name of André, Hernu received payments of between Fr10,000 and Fr15,000. He again stood for election after Charles de Gaulle's return in 1958, but was defeated. However, his employers in Moscow reportedly gave him Fr300,000 ($58,824) to finance his campaign.

In 1961, Hernu was deeply committed in the struggle against the OAS (Organisation Armée Secrète), which was fighting Gaullism and opposed independence for Algeria. "He was to be given police protection," writes L'Express, "so he asked [illegible]"

However, he made contact with the Romanian secret service — the Securitate — again in Paris after 1962. A file about him dated December 14, 1962, has been found. Around that time the future minister, who had by then become reconciled with Mitterrand, received the code name "Dinu". He continued to supply political analyses for money, but the men in Bucharest for whom he was working found some of his reports to be of scant interest.

That did not prevent the KGB from short-circuiting the Bulgarian and Romanian intermediaries and dealing directly with Hernu. The file turned over to the DST in 1992 does not show whether contacts between Hernu and the Russians were broken off. L'Express claims Bucharest attempted to renew contacts with Hernu in 1982, when he [illegible] defence minister, but gave up because it was thought to be too risky.

Hernu died of a heart attack in January 1990, three weeks after the fall of the Ceausescu regime in Romania, whose secret service records sent the DST director rushing off to see Mitterrand at the Elysée Palace.

(October 31)



'Greenpeace was a dirty trick by Moscow' 'I must be dreaming'

No more state secrets

EDITORIAL

THE public life of Charles Hernu never provided any clues as to any alleged involvement with the intelligence services of the Warsaw Pact countries. If he was an intelligence agent, it would have been in the former minister's interest to adopt postures diametrically opposed to his secret loyalties. That's the first thing one learns in this shadowy business.

Hernu was haunted by secrets of his youth — his service in the Vichy administration in 1944; and he was a communist fellow-traveller in the 1950s. For all that, the counter espionage service (DST) is not the Court of History and its convictions should not be taken as certainties.

The matter is too serious to be left in this twilight zone of rumour and suspicion. The secrecy must be lifted, the truth must be told. The public, political parties and people's elected representatives have a right to know. The state secret is no longer acceptable today.

Instead of being on the defensive, the left should be the first to press for openness. If not, it is the Socialist party in particular that will have the Hernu business hanging over it. If it really wants to forget its disappoint-[illegible] Socialist party will have to break with a culture of denial, indeed of untruth, which from Vichy and government corruption down to the president's final illness will remain one of the characteristics of the Mitterrand era.

(November 1)

France's secret plan for a nuclear Europe

Daniel Vernet

AT the end of the 1950s, France took a decisive step towards developing a nuclear weapon, with the help of West Germany and Italy. The three countries seriously considered pooling resources to fund the isotope separation plant at Pierrelatte, and it was only Charles de Gaulle's return to power that put an end to the "armaments triangle", an episode that all three countries have remained silent about.

In the autumn of 1956, a decisive impetus was given to a kind of atomic "European Defence Community". With France and Great Britain humiliated by the Suez crisis, and Europe's division into two blocs sealed by the crushing of the Hungarian revolution, the hesitations of Guy Mollet's government were swept aside.

November 6, 1956 was a dramatic day. The day before, French and British soldiers had parachuted into the Suez Canal zone, bringing an aggressive response from Moscow and pressure from Washington. It was the day that Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was on an official visit to Paris, where he took part in a long cabinet meeting.

"Guy Mollet kept leaving the room all the time to phone [Anthony] Eden," recalls Maurice Faure, secretary of state at the foreign ministry at the time. "The British prime minister was beginning to give in to Washington."

In France, the Suez crisis hastened the decision to develop nuclear weapons. But, the means available to France were limited, particularly as the war in Algeria was draining its resources.

Maurice Bourgès-Manoury, defence minister at the time, invited his West German counterpart, Franz-Josef Strauss, to visit the nuclear installations in the Sahara. An official document, which remained secret until 1993, noted that "the two ministers signed the Colomb-Béchar agreement" to initiate "close co-operation in the area of military design and armaments, and for co-ordinating resources and scientific, technical and industrial means for this purpose".

There was a question of developing "new weapons", but at the time these were rockets capable of carrying nuclear charges, not nuclear warheads themselves.

Strauss was firmly on the side of nuclear deterrence. Like Adenauer, he wanted the German Federal Republic's rights to be given equal respect in the Atlantic alliance. The determination of Germany and France, with which Italy was closely linked, was strengthened in 1957 when a whole new strategic scenario emerged with the launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviets, which showed that they could target United States territory.

Would the US put its own existence at risk in the event of a nuclear threat being made against Europe? With the doctrine of massive retaliation changing into one of a graduated response, was there not a danger of Germany turning into a nuclear battlefield? Would not the planned scaling down of US troops deployed in Europe finally lead to "decoupling" of the US from Europe?

On November 15, 1957, the French prime minister, Félix Gaillard, presided over a secret cabinet meeting called to draw conclusions from the launching of Sputnik. Washington had reacted by strengthening ties with Britain and offering a kind of vague nuclear co-operation with the Western European Union (WEO).

France was irritated by the weapons the British and the Americans were beginning to deploy in Tunisia, which Paris feared would end up in Algerian rebel hands. A decision had to be taken. France could not continue relying on the US for its defence. It had to make its own nuclear weapons, but it had to secure the co-operation of Italy and Germany.

Emilio Taviani, Italy's defence minister at the time, was expected in Paris the next day. Faure travelled to Bonn on November 16 to explain the situation.

Adenauer recalls in his memoirs that Faure said: "A defence of Europe without United States participation is unthinkable, but Europe must increase its own efforts." His government, the chancellor noted, shared France's concern.

Taviani joined his German and French counterparts on November 20 to sign a protocol covering aircraft, missiles and "military and nuclear energy applications". The initial text contained the phrase "nuclear explosives", but Strauss had it changed in order to cover himself in the event of the document becoming public.

In a note sent to the WEO and Nato, the three ministers indicated their intention of "developing a surface-to-surface ballistic weapon capable of carrying a thermonuclear warhead with a range of 2,800km that could be adapted for use by naval forces".

At the end of January 1958, Chaban, Strauss and Taviani met again, this time in Bonn, with Adenauer. But the German chancellor told his minister: "Go ahead, but if it goes wrong, I haven't heard a thing."

A new protocol was signed on April 8 over the Pierrelatte plant, whose cost was put at $140 million. Financing the production of enriched uranium would be shared between the three countries — 45 per cent each by France and Germany, with Italy providing the remaining 10 per cent.

But that was as far as this nuclear co-operation was to go. De Gaulle was back in power. At the first defence meeting held under his chairmanship, he put the April 8 project on hold. Strauss reacted angrily by dropping plans to buy the Mirage-III and ordered US F-104s instead.

Would the co-operation have led to a nuclear Europe? The reservations of the parties involved in the secret talks tend to suggest it would not.

Some were determined to strengthen Europe's independence, others saw this co-operation only as a way of leaning on the US to force it to share its nuclear technology. Others borrowed from both tendencies, considering a European solution the only hope in the event of the US taking a tough line.

(October 27/28)

Third World hit by traffic in fake drugs

Philippe Broussard

FROM street markets in Lagos to backshops in Bangkok, business in fake medicines is booming. There is hardly a Third World country where counterfeit pills sporting the trademarks of European or North American laboratories are not easily available.

There are plenty of counterfeiters, some highly qualified, others less so, who are capable of concocting bogus antibiotics just as others fake Swiss watches — the difference being that no one was ever killed by a watch.

Their products can be dangerous for several reasons. The concentrations of the ingredients may be incorrect; an ingredient may have been replaced by some ersatz such as coffee or sugar that has no effect on the ailment; and sometimes the preparation is quite simply toxic.

The problem has been around for years. In 1990, 109 Nigerian children died after taking syrup that contained antifreeze. Similar cases have been recorded in Bangladesh, where 250 children died between 1990 and 1993.

One of the most spectacular frauds occurred in February last year, when a meningitis epidemic swept through Niger, one of the world's poorest countries. Its neighbour, Nigeria, made it a gift of 88,000 doses of meningitis vaccine bearing the Mérieux and SmithKline Beecham trademarks.

A team of Belgian doctors belonging to Médecins Sans Frontières [illegible] began vaccinating children. They were suspicious about the quality of the vaccine: it did not dilute easily, and contained black filaments. But given the urgency of the situation and the fact that the vaccine had been donated by a friendly government, the doctors continued their work. On their return to Belgium, however, they decided to have the vaccine analysed: it turned out to be just water.

All the indications are that cases like this are on the increase. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that at least 7 per cent of drugs sold worldwide each year are fake. The percentage may be as high as 30 per cent in Brazil and 60 per cent in Africa, where counterfeiters act with complete impunity because of corruption and crumbling health structures.

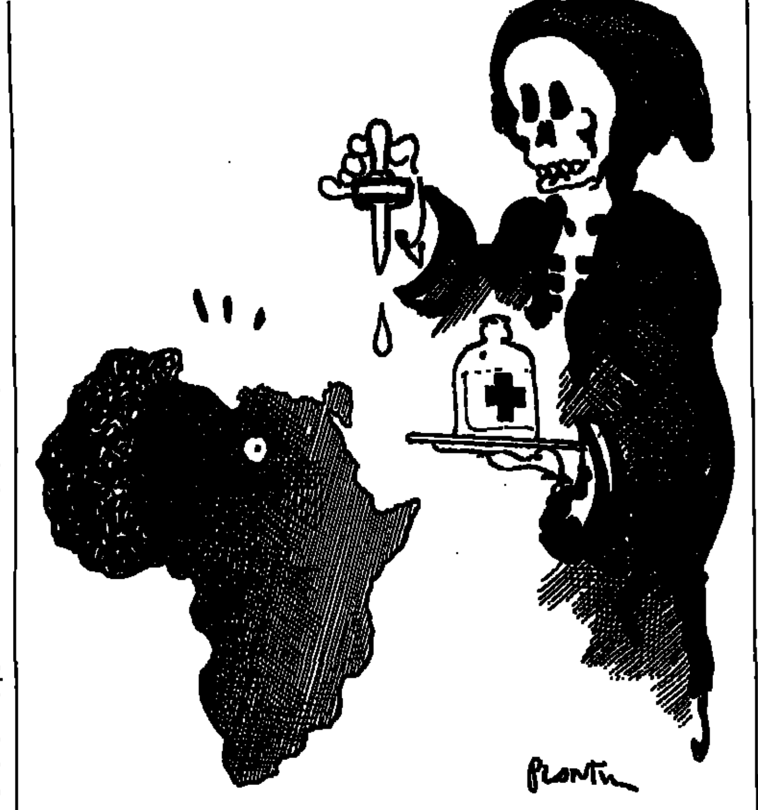
The pharmaceutical industry, the WHO and non-governmental organisations such as MSF and Pharmaciens Sans Frontières accept that in some countries the situation is out of control.

In a document dated September 30, MSF laid down guidelines for its teams operating in developing countries: "In almost all such countries there has been a proliferation of pharmaceutical . . . products which either do not contain sufficient concentrations or are debased or counterfeited. The use of local supplies is therefore forbidden in cases where MSF is not in a position to handle local purchases without risk."

There are several reasons for the increase in fraud. First, it brings in big money. According to WHO estimates, annual sales in this sector are $16 billion. It is believed that in Pakistan alone fake drugs worth $160 million are sold each year.

Drug counterfeiters who manage to lay their hands on the "recipe" for a preparation can sell it very competitively because they will not have paid for research and development. They can also shave concentrations and thus cut production costs. If they go one step further on the dis- [illegible] pills out of flour or starch, a common practice in Africa. With modern printing techniques, packaging and labelling pose no problems.

They still have to sell their product without running into customs controls. That, too, is child's play: with trade booming it is virtually impossible to keep tabs on a drug. A cancer drug manufactured in Bangladesh may well be sold to Indonesia, where it will pass through the hands of a Dutch trader and end up being smuggled into Sierra Leone.



Nor is there any problem in getting hold of the raw materials for fake pills. They are easily available from middlemen based in Hong Kong or Hamburg. The laboratories in Haiti or Nigeria which use such materials to manufacture drugs do not have the technical or financial resources to vet their quality.

LARGE-SCALE fraud has become a highly professional activity, a leading figure in the pharmaceutical industry says: "In the case of more sophisticated medicines, there are specialised channels. Trafficking in the active ingredient goes on at the level of big organisations. Then the ingredient is distributed among small decentralised and highly mobile labs, which work on a range of products for about six months at a time, before moving on to something else.

"Remember that the difficult bit is inventing the medicine, not copying it. Copying may be hard for a beginner, but it's relatively simple for a trained chemist. And we're talking about a business that hires top-notch personnel."

Counterfeiters have also taken advantage of economic developments in certain regions of the world. The crisis caused by the devaluation of the CFA franc made French-speaking Africa particularly vulnerable.

Hospitals themselves often turn to the black market because it offers products at more affordable prices. Hence the success in Cameroon, for example, of so-called "lawn pharmacies", where street vendors spread out their products on the ground.

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations (IFPMA) and the WHO, which have a network of correspondents throughout the world, are doing their best to heighten awareness of the problem in such countries as Zimbabwe, Togo and Thailand and to centralise information on the subject.

It is an uphill task, because most of the countries concerned do not have the necessary structures for carrying out such investigations. Much fraud goes on without the public or even the health authorities being aware of it, because it is virtually impossible to gauge the effect on the ground of the distribution of toxic products. When people die, the cause of death is not examined by an expert, but usually ascribed to this or that endemic disease.

All leading laboratories want to see increased controls and have called for "mobilisation". But very few of them will go so far as to say so in public for fear of damaging their image in the eyes of customers in the developed countries.

Similarly, laboratories are reluctant to engage in often fruitless legal proceedings because they are keen not to ruffle the feathers of the authorities in the country concerned. They prefer to use the services of private detectives, and are looking into the possibilities of setting up a joint agency aimed at breaking up the traffickers' networks.

PAUL CARRATU, head of the London-based Carratu International detective agency, has 10 or so laboratories on his books. He says: "Italy and Spain are the European countries where laboratories turn out high-class products. But they also provide a back door that allows fake products to come in from outside the European Union — their customs services are inefficient and corrupt. France and Britain, on the other hand, are well protected.

"But it is the countries of the former Soviet bloc that offer an ideal environment for fraud: they have a virtually nonexistent police force, hi-tech factories and financial and human resources controlled by organised crime. It's like the Wild West out there."

But Europe has its black sheep too. A 1992 Interpol report claimed that Belgium was being used as a transit point for Asian-manufactured products bearing the label "made in Belgium". The products were then exported to Africa and South America via the port of Antwerp and Zaventem airport in Brussels.

Jean-François Gaulis, the IFPMA's head of public relations, feels only a strong political response can prevent a disaster from occurring. In his view, the problem of drugs counterfeiting is something the World Bank, Unicef and the WHO, as well as the laboratories, will have to get to grips with. "It should never be forgotten that we're dealing with serious crime," he says.

(October 26)

Where the Rhône does not flow smoothly

A plan to pipe water to Barcelona from France is facing opposition, writes **Richard Benguigui**

IN 2004, purified water from the Rhône river could well be coursing through Barcelona's mains system. Plans to build a 314km underground pipeline from Montpellier to the Catalan capital are still on the drawing board. But the scheme, which seemed far-fetched to some when first aired in 1994, is now beginning to take shape. So is opposition to it on both sides of the Pyrenees.

The project is the brainchild of Bas-Rhône-Languedoc (BRL), a Nimes-based development corporation run by the Languedoc-Roussillon general council. Studies have shown that by 2002 Barcelona's water resources will no longer meet the needs of the development of the city's urban and industrial zones.

BRL is entitled to draw off 75 cubic metres per second of water from the Rhône. To satisfy the water requirements of Greater Barcelona and its population of 5 million over the next 20 years, 12-15 cubic metres per second could be transferred southwards via pipeline from the canal which already connects the Rhône with Montpellier.

In BRL's view, the project has the added advantage of guaranteeing more reliable water supplies for the Languedoc-Roussillon region. Oddly, there is no infrastructure to carry Rhône water further than Montpellier. Every summer, local prefects have to restrict the distribution of a resource that is available in perfectly adequate quantities.

A month ago, BRL and ATTL, Barcelona's water company, set up a European economic interest grouping which will do further research into Catalonia's needs, check the feasibility of the proposed technical solutions, and define the scheme's management structure and financial package.

The scheme, which is expected to cost 8 billion francs ($1.6 billion) and create 3,000 jobs over four years, will probably not need to dip into the taxpayer's purse. It could be financed by an international banking pool. Interest repayments would come out of the Catalans' water bills.

An initial feasibility study carried out in October 1995 judged the French proposals to be technically sound. The two other possibilities so far examined by the Spanish — the drawing-off of water from the Ebre river and a seawater desalination plant — seem more difficult to implement.

The flow of the Ebre can fall to less than 15 cubic metres per second in summer, and desalination would produce water that cost up to $2 per cubic metre as against just under $1 under the BRL scheme.

The Spanish government, which has decided to hammer out a completely new national hydrological plan, will not take a final decision until 1998. The Spanish environment minister, Isabel Tocino, says that priority will be given to using the Ebre, if it turns out to be necessary.

Meanwhile BRL is looking to Jordi Pujol, the powerful president of Catalonia's general council, for support and feels certain that, despite opposition from within the Spanish government, its scheme will be examined carefully, as hoped by the French and Spanish foreign ministers in July.

In Languedoc-Roussillon, farmers have been the first to express concern about the scheme. They cannot understand why Spanish farmers should be sold water that will only help them to compete with their French counterparts.

BRL's president, Jean-Louis Blanc, believes that the water, once it reaches Spain, will not be used much for agricultural purposes since its price is bound to be way above what farmers normally have to pay. But young French farmers persist in believing that Rhône water will end up giving their competitors an edge.

Opposition has also come from environmentalists. In July, the scheme prompted Spanish Catalan and Languedocian Greens to get together in Montpellier. Barcelona's ecologist city councillor, Joseph Puig, said: "What Catalonia needs is not more water, but different policies as regards the economy and depollution."

He estimated that 25 per cent of the water in Barcelona's mains was being lost through leakage, and claimed that 12 million cubic metres of water were being poured into the sea every year in order to prevent flooding in the metro.

Greens in Languedoc apparently oppose the project, which they describe as "Pharaonic", on more political grounds. With regional elections coming up in two years, the issue could enable them to score points against former Greens who have gone over to the majority headed by the regional council's president, the centrist Jacques Blanc — who also happens to be president of BRL's supervisory board.

(October 22)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Tutsi Rebels Threaten Zaire's Future

Lynne Duke in Kinshasa

THE ZAIRIAN army's apparent rout at the hands of Tutsi rebels last week has given rise to new fears that the slow disintegration of this vast nation, a process underway for years, could accelerate and further threaten the stability of the central African region.

Thus far, however, the main tangible result of the chaotic fighting near the eastern border with Rwanda and Burundi has been a rise in nationalistic fervor, along with open ethnic hatred aimed at the Tutsi minority. In the short run, analysts said, these factors tend to knit the country together. In the long run, though, they may only deepen Zaire's grave peril.

At stake is the future of one of Africa's largest and potentially richest countries, one long beset by rampant corruption, crumbling infrastructure and a government whose reach and control have become dangerously weak. Linked to Zaire's prospects is the stability of a densely populated region already reeling from ethnic wars and massive flows of refugees.

Even before the current crisis, Zaire hosted more than 1 million refugees from the clashes between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi. Last week's fighting has pushed those refugees — a massive, potentially destabilizing wave — farther into Zaire and made it less likely that they will ever leave.

With President Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire's longtime strongman, having spent around three months in Switzerland undergoing cancer treatment — and with the news that his condition apparently has worsened markedly — fear among diplomats of a possible military coup here have become more pronounced.



A Zairean woman with a child on her back loots a shop as Goma came under attack last weekend PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE MULALA

Zaire's military commander, Gen. Eluki Mongo Dundu, sharply criticized Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo for not providing swift and sufficient support for the war effort in the east against Tutsi rebels and the Tutsi-controlled Rwandan army, which has captured the towns of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira.

"If the president had been here, then the government would not have acted so slowly," Eluki told reporters last weekend, complaining that Kengo's government "is moving too slowly."

Mobutu has ruled Zaire for three decades. Once a reliable U.S. ally, he has progressively receded from governance in the past several years — first to a yacht on the Zaire River, then to a presidential hamlet in the country's north, and now to Lausanne, Switzerland, where he is being treated for prostate cancer. His illness, which wire services reported last weekend has sharply worsened, has only deepened the power vacuum.

Many observers have suggested that the Zaire-Tutsi war, coupled with Mobutu's absence, could lead to Zaire's breakup into anarchy and further destabilize the African Great Lakes region of Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania. Some analysts say, however, that rumors of Zaire's demise might be premature.

"It's quite a simplistic analysis, number one. And number two, it would be a complete disaster," said Aldo Ajello, the European Union's special envoy to the region.

Rather than a political breakup, the opposite effect is being manifested here in Zaire's capital. Students and others demonstrated last week in favor of the war effort. Even Zaire's opposition parties were largely united in their support of the war. Some businesses were collecting money at the weekend for the bedraggled military, whose soldiers earn a pittance and are paid only intermittently — one of the casualties of the corrupt and ineffectual Mobutu government, which has squandered the great mineral wealth of this nation of 45 million.

Zaire's Banyamulenge Tutsis, who have lived in the Mulenge mountain region along Lake Tanganyika for several generations, have been the target of a Zairian campaign to push them out of the country. That tension, abetted by Rwanda, sparked the fighting that has raged for since last month in a thin swath of territory along Zaire's lake-bound borders with Rwanda and Burundi.

A Losing Battle Against Voter Apathy

COMMENT
George F. Will

PRESIDENT Clinton will win more convincingly than in 1992, when he received 43 percent of the 55 percent of the population 18 or older that voted. That 55 percent was a 5-point uptick in participation over 1988, and this week the rate of participation probably will resume its decline.

Curtis Gans of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate says low voting rates are symptoms of a multifaceted sickness in the nation's civic culture. Writing in Roll Call, the newspaper that covers Congress, Gans notes a puzzle: Participation should be increasing. The electorate is becoming older, better educated and less mobile; 5 million new voters have been registered since 1992, largely because of the "motor voter" law, which enables people to register where they get driver's licenses or welfare and other social services; a large issue — the role of government generally and the federal government in particular — is being debated; unprecedented sums are being spent on political advocacy; voter mobilization is being encouraged by groups from MTV to the AFL-CIO. Yet the time networks are devoting to political coverage — a leading indicator of the public's interestedness — is down 40 percent from 1992.

Gans' list of culprits includes much of modern life: "anti-government demagoguery"; the shift of the Republican Party too far right and a Democratic Party "without a believable message more constant than the most proximate public opinion poll"; the atrophy of both parties and most churches as mobilizing institutions; the savagery of attack ads; government paralysis produced by the national debt; the atomization of society and the isolation of individuals produced by entertainment-driven media.

In 1994 only 12 percent of 18- and 19-year-olds voted, and only 15 percent of those 18-24. Of course one way to increase the voting rate would be to raise the voting age. It is said that conservatism increases when the children need orthodontia — when expenses concentrate minds on disposable income. Similarly, participation in elections increases, says Charles Cook, the election analyst, when people's bookshelves are no longer made of boards and cinder blocks — when people are old enough to care about things that usually pull people to the polls, such as property taxes and schools. But even people with better bookshelves have been voting less than they used to.

What age cohort has the highest voting rate? The cohort with the highest dependency on government — those receiving Social Security and Medicare. Participation increases when politics is not peripheral to happiness. But, then, in a free and constitutional society, elections are of limited importance because life's basic enjoyments are not at risk.

Arend Lijphart of the University of California, San Diego, writing in the Chronicle of Higher Education, advocates compulsory voting — fining nonvoters, as in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Greece, Italy and elsewhere. Even small and irregularly imposed fines produce 95 percent participation in Australia.

Lijphart, a liberal, favors coercion because he thinks low turnouts favor the affluent and educated. But policy preferences are more evenly distributed in the population than he supposes. And Lijphart's argument concedes a point conservatives make regarding electorates: smaller means smarter. (Actually, it means more schooled, which is different.)

Gans, a Democrat but principled, thinks Republicans should seek a court injunction to prevent networks from declaring a presidential winner until polls have closed in the West. Gans says such a declaration might depress voting, especially by depressed Republicans, as much as 5 percent among the one-third of those who vote after 6pm in California, Washington and Oregon, where there are many close races. Between 1980 and 1990 the winners in 53 state contests or federal elections in those three states had margins of less than three percentage points.

Regarding nationwide participation, Gans rightly stresses complex cultural factors that are resistant to institutional reforms, such as the "motor voter" law. In the most telling test of that law so far — Kentucky's 1995 gubernatorial election — participation by persons who registered when getting driver's licenses was less than half that of "self-motivated" registrants, and participation was just one in 10 by those registered at welfare agencies.

Finally, Gans may underestimate the extent to which nonvoting is the way many contented people express passive consent to current conditions. And nonvoting is a sensible way for people who feel soiled by contemporary campaigning to express disgust.

A Brave Man Is Sent Down In Beijing

EDITORIAL

A BRAVE 27-year-old dissident leader named Wang Dan is the victim of the Chinese government's latest sullen message to Washington on human rights. The United States had expressed its concern that he was being tried for asserting rights guaranteed by Chinese law. Such a step, Washington warned, would weaken the American capacity to carry through a broad policy of "deepening China's integration into the international system." That warning was reiterated to Beijing on what turned out to be the day before a Chinese court found Mr. Wang guilty of subversion last week and imprisoned him for 11 years. China was declaring that it considers its human rights performance an internal matter and not something that can be part of the broad relationship the United States seeks.

The sentence takes out of action the last big name of Chinese dissidence to have survived the Democracy Wall movement of 1979 and the Tiananmen massacre of perhaps thousands of democracy demonstrators in 1989. The other protest figures known abroad are either in jail, in exile or dead. In that sense, this latest trial is a success for Beijing. It has advertised its extraordinary fear of the mutually reinforcing political chemistry — between homegrown dissidents and their foreign encouragers — that helped bring down the old Soviet-bloc Communist regimes. But it has also diminished for a while the opportunity for that chemistry to work.

The policy of promoting economic reform as a substitute for political reform still seems to enjoy a consensus in the upper reaches of the Communist leadership, who are going to stick with it while the current slow-motion political transition goes on.

But there is no reason for the United States to condone this choice. The situation in China is not only repressive, it is unstable. Wang Dan's insistence that democratic reforms are needed in order to cool the "hidden lava" of social unrest is not merely a statement of his political agenda but a coolheaded analysis of the Chinese reality. The totalitarian government in Beijing is not just an object of disrepute but a poor partner for the United States as it attempts to deal with post-Cold War East Asia.

The Clinton administration, following its predecessor, has chosen a policy of increasing engagement with China. All right. But that engagement must be across the board: It must include an unwavering American insistence that China adopt the civilizing norms of the countries with which it seeks closer ties. The requisite political support will not be there for a policy that ignores central conditions of human rights.

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Bombing of U.S. Saudi Base Still a Mystery

R. Jeffrey Smith

SECRETARY OF Defense William J. Perry said last week that the United States has not yet concluded who was responsible for the June bombing of a U.S. military compound in Saudi Arabia, and he and other U.S. officials renewed calls for full cooperation from Saudi authorities in investigating the blast.

Perry was responding to a report that Saudi authorities have been holding about 40 Saudi citizens whom they have concluded were involved in the bombing and have traced the attack to a broad conspiracy they are convinced was backed by the government of Iran and possibly Syria. The report also said Saudi security officials have not yet fully briefed Washington on their findings.

"We have reached no conclusions about who was responsible" for the bombing that killed 19 U.S. Air Force service members in Dhahran, Perry told reporters. He noted that in the past he has "made clear" to top Saudi officials the need for full cooperation.

Other U.S. officials decried what they described as a failure by the Saudi Arabian government to share all it knows about the bombing with the United States.

Saudi officials have withheld some details of their investigation from Washington out of concern that the Clinton administration in the days before the U.S. elections might rush to retaliate in a way that the Saudis would view as harmful. Those few U.S. officials cleared to learn some of what the Saudis know have in turn withheld some of that data from others in the U.S. government, according to U.S. officials.

The report, in the Washington Post on Friday last week, quoted knowledgeable sources as saying the Saudi government had obtained confessions and other evidence that it says implicated Iran as the instigator and sponsor of the attack and also suggest potential advance knowledge or involvement by Syria.

U.S. officials have said recently that they believe Tehran has used its embassies and other resources throughout the Middle East and even in South America to build and support an international network of Islamic extremist groups under its authority.

But the degree to which this organization, which has been dubbed the "Hezbollah Internationale" by some counter-terrorism experts, operates as one coherent body under Tehran's central command remains unclear, according to American officials.

U.S. officials say the Lebanese-based Hezbollah, or the "Party of God," has received hundreds of millions of dollars from Tehran over the past decade and served as Iran's principal proxy for mounting terrorist operations against Israeli and American targets in the Middle East and Latin America. A big question is the degree to which Hezbollah groups in other countries also are directed by Iran. Saudi authorities have concluded the Dhahran bombing was staged by members of Saudi Hezbollah.

Iran has been using its embassies around the world to establish Hezbollah cells "that operate under the guidance and with the intelligence of Iranian embassies," Philip C. Wilcox Jr. the State Department's coordinator for counter-terrorism, said in a recent interview.

Asked whether a "Hezbollah Internationale" formally exists, Wilcox replied, "Yes, if you mean by that groups supported by and in touch with Iran." But, he added, "how structured and organized it is, I don't know."

U.S. Left Out In Nerve Gas Treaty Moves

Thomas W. Lippman

A 65TH NATION has ratified an international treaty banning production or use of nerve gas weapons. This sets enforcement in motion and sidelines the United States, as a major arms control measure that Washington promoted for a decade heads for enactment without its participation.

Hungary deposited its ratification documents with the United Nations last week, starting a six-month clock that will bring the Chemical Weapons Convention into force on April 29.

Because the treaty has never been ratified by the Senate, the United States is precluded from participating in enforcement preparations, will not be represented on the teams conducting international inspections, and will not have access to information those inspections develop.

The Senate could ratify the treaty after the new Congress assembles in January, but whether it will do so *probably depends on the outcome* of this week's elections.

Conservative Republicans, including Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi and Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms of North Carolina opposed ratification, despite support for the treaty from the Pentagon, the State Department and the major U.S. chemical manufacturers, and could still block it if the GOP retains control of the Senate.

"I would hope that outside of election year politics senators of both parties would wake up and recognize the seriousness of the chemical proliferation problem and the need for this treaty to deal with it," said Amy Smithson, a fellow at the Stimson Center in Washington.

"If we don't ratify, we'll be the loser, because we'll have to live under an enforcement regime devised by other countries," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

One of the most ambitious arms control accords ever negotiated, the convention bans manufacture, possession or use of chemical weapons, puts controls on the sales of chemicals used to make them and sets up a system of inspections to deter violations. Some 160 nations have signed the treaty, and the 65th ratification will bring it into force.

Russia and the United States, which have the world's biggest stockpiles of such weapons, have signed the treaty but not ratified it.

'Engine Fault' As 102 Die in Brazil Crash

Gabriel Escobar in São Paulo

FOLLOWING the disaster last week when a jetliner plowed into a row of houses, killing all 96 people aboard and six on the ground, this metropolis began a painstaking official review of what happened to TAM Flight 402. The plane was bound for Rio de Janeiro when it crashed just 65 seconds after taking off.

Officials at the Ministry of Aeronautics said it was too early to discuss a cause, but speculation elsewhere centered on the right engine. The Fokker 100 has two Rolls-Royce engines, toward the rear of the plane, and technicians at the airport were quoted in newspapers as saying there was a problem with one immediately after takeoff.

The plane tilted to the right, according to witnesses, and never reached an altitude higher than a 10-story building. One possibility is that the right engine's braking mechanism, which is deployed only during landing, may have been activated. A pilot faced with such a predicament could have responded with several maneuvers to counter the effect, according to analysts speculating in the media here, but the low trajectory of the plane may have doomed it.



Bodies covered with plastic sheets lie in the street after a Brazilian airliner crashed into a residential area of São Paulo, starting a fire that engulfed homes and cars

An airport worker interviewed on Brazilian television said he saw the braking mechanism open and close several times after the plane took off.

In the aftermath of the crash, several officials again questioned the wisdom of operating a busy airport in the middle of a city with 12 million people. One suggested that a commission be formed to re-examine the issue. In the late 1980s, Congonhas airport was almost converted into a mall after the city's international airport made it obsolescent. But the emergence of airlines like TAM and an increase in domestic air travel gave it new life as one of the busiest airports in South America.

The death toll on the ground could easily have been higher. The plane just missed a school as well as the only tall building in the neighborhood. Immediately after the crash, burning jet fuel created a river of fire that coursed down the steep street, burning parked cars along the way.

Getting It Wrong in the Search for Mr Right

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

FROM time to time in the history of relationships, a creature re-emerges out of the primeval muck proclaiming that she has the secret that will lead women into the happily-married-ever-after.

In the 1970s, she was The Total Woman. This icon, hatched by Marabel Morgan, guaranteed nuptial nirvana to women if only they stopped *"nagging" men and learned to greet* them at the door in nothing but a towel. The Total Woman was responsible for some rather alarmed drivers and one very happy publisher.

Now, in the 1990s, she is The Rules Girl, a female who makes the Cosmo Girl look comparatively liberated. Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider have taken "The Rules" for "capturing the heart of Mr. Right" straight from the past onto the number one spot on the best-seller list.

The Rules is a veritable compost heap of Do's and (Mostly) Don'ts for a woman — oops, girl — who wants to master the fine art of womanipulation. It's a how-to book: How to make a man desperate to marry a girl just like the girl that married dear old great-granddad.

Among the 35 "time-tested secrets" are these: Don't Talk to Him First. Don't Call Him. Don't Split the Check. End the Phone Call and the Date First. Don't Accept a Date for Saturday Later Than Wednesday. Let Him Take the Lead.

Now, my opinion on this subject is suspect. As the authors warn, "Highly educated girls have the hardest time with The Rules. They tend to think all this is beneath them." You bet.

But what this book shares with its predecessors is a stunningly low opinion of men — which in no way seems to stop women from wanting them. The Mr. Rights of The Rules are hopelessly driven hunter-gatherers "born to respond to a challenge." They are also and absolutely immune to change "because men never really change." But they are, at the same time, easily conned, "conditioned," "trained" and twisted around the finger of The Rules Girl: "Do The Rules and even the biggest playboy can be yours!"

If Susan Faludi penned such a profile of the species, she would be tarred for male-bashing. But the authors' portrait of women isn't a whole lot more flattering. Without The Rules, they'd be quivering, smothering, marriage-lusting losers.

This is an era that has witnessed the return of the girdle and the push-up bra (see Wonderbra). We shouldn't be surprised to see the recycling of the Tender Trap.

This book probably was conceived as a self-defense text for women who started out sharing dinner checks and ended up feeling exploited. In fairness, some rules — Don't Date Married Men — make sense. As does the sub-subtext of self-respect.

But this Makeover has some bizarre contradictions for those of us who grew up breaking rules. The same Rules Girl who is informed that "Men must take the lead" is also told that "Men like women who are their own person . . . "Single women are supposed to *act* independent. Without actually being independent. Is it any surprise that another rule is "Don't Discuss The Rules with Your Therapist"?

The old games were based on mistrust. This ancient hostility skids unhappily across the pages of this modern manual.

"Remember, early on in a relationship," the authors warn, "the man is the adversary (if he's someone you really like). He has the power to hurt you . . . he runs the show." But if friendship is against the rules, why play?

There's one good piece of advice in this book. "Before he comes to your apartment tuck this book away in your top drawer." Aw hell, put it in the wastebasket.

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Oslo Wary Of Day Oil Runs Out

Fred Barbash in Oslo

MOST COUNTRIES have a national budget deficit, and the "deficit problem" is one of the great worries of our age — so much so that you wonder what countries would worry about if they didn't have one. The answer can be found in Norway — which has a surplus.

It turns out that a country that has lost its deficit worries nonetheless about the deficit, specifically that it might come back. Call it post-deficit stress disorder. Call it prudence. Whatever you call it, it's joyless.

Here is a country in a fiscal state of grace — unemployment as low as is prudent at 4.5 percent, the highest growth rate on the continent, one of the few European nations not slashing its welfare state — yet government officials, economists and central bankers wring their hands, cautioning, as the government did last month in its 1997 budget message, of the dangers of "exaggerated optimism."

Outgoing Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, asked in an interview last month what is the biggest issue she faces, said "the economy."

Norway is the world's second largest exporter of oil, 2.7 million barrels daily to Saudi Arabia's 7.7 million. The country is gushing with oil and flowing with natural gas — most of which, because of a population of 4.3 million, it can sell elsewhere.

Government revenue from oil — royalties and taxes — is the reason there is no deficit. But are they having fun with it? No. Instead of going on a spending spree, the government is pumping vast revenues from oil into a Petroleum Fund to provide for the day the wells run dry. It's disgustingly sensible.

The Norwegians haven't always been this way. They struck oil in the 1970s, got rich in the '80s, spent great sums improving roads, building bridges, modernizing. They got "hooked on oil," as they say. Then, in the mid-1980s, the price of oil took a dive, and so did their economy. Norwegians have not forgotten.

Roughly a year ago, the country went through one of its most divisive political debates, over a referendum on whether to join the European Union, the 15-nation "single market" of 300 million people.

Those *in favor of joining argued* Norway could get swamped economically if it missed the EU wave. Those against it contended joining the EU would rob the nation of its sovereignty and character.

The voters — 52 to 48 percent — said no to joining. Norway thus joined Switzerland and Liechtenstein as the only states in Western Europe outside the union. Instead of going down, the economy soared.

The government is to pour roughly $7 billion, approximately 10 percent of its revenue and virtually the entire government surplus for 1997, into the Petroleum Fund. The fund, to avoid inflation and what its managers consider artificial support to the domestic economy, is invested entirely abroad. Projections are that by 2000, the fund will be worth about $108 billion at today's dollar values.

"What we have to do now," said Brundtland, "is invest in the future."

Berlin Goes on Building Spree

Jonathan C. Randal in Berlin

BERLIN BOASTS that it is "Europe's biggest building site," but the German capital is especially proud that the gigantic construction effort to restore its former glory is proceeding with a minimum of noise, dirt and disruption.

Cranes galore, dump trucks by the dozens and earth-moving equipment in quantities worthy of an army are much in evidence in the vast expanse of downtown Berlin, once divided and disfigured by the Cold War wall and now billed as the bustling future heart of Europe.

With Parliament due to move from Bonn into the restored Reichstag building by spring 1999, Berlin remains confident the deadline can be met while respecting Germany's zealous devotion to protecting the environment.

Helping keep pollution and traffic congestion under control is intensive use of barge traffic and trains to take away earth, sand and mud displaced by construction and bring in fine sand for concrete, steel, glass and other building materials.

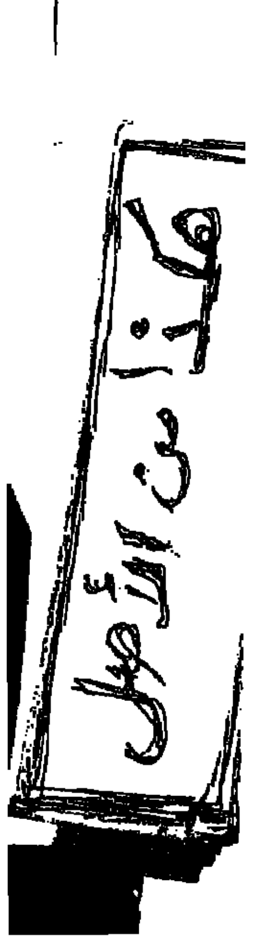
Vigilant Green Party environmentalists are delighted with the triumph of their ideals, even if they are no longer in the Berlin government — and chafe at their Social Democratic and Christian Democratic political foes getting credit for policies they originally championed. Hartwig Berger, the Greens' top environmentalist, praised the engineers for "this very good solution" rather than relying on truck traffic. He said he would like to see "more operations like this."

With environmental concerns in mind, a temporary bridge was built over city streets for trucks to shuttle between construction sites and a brand-new railhead. The goal was to keep construction traffic off roads around Berlin's Potsdamer Platz — perhaps Europe's busiest crossroads before World War II, but an immense dead landscape during the Cold War.

On the bend of the River Spree in Berlin's historic center, barges remove excavated dirt and mud to Spandau, at the western end of this sprawling city, and as far away as old brown coal mines at Lausitz 30 miles to the south.

Near the Reichstag building, now being restored for use by Parliament for the first time since the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Spree has been temporarily diverted to allow construction of a complex system of car, railroad, subway and commuter train tunnels that will pass under the Tiergarten park.

But uncrowded streets and public transportation, and the general lack of traffic jams seem likely to become a thing of the past as Berlin braces itself for the onslaught of civil servants, diplomats, business people and lobbyists that is expected with the transfer of government here.



Children of a New Prosperity

Steven Pearlstein

THE INHERITANCE: How Three Families and America Moved from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond
By Samuel G. Freedman
Simon & Schuster. 464pp. $27.50

IN THIS high season of national politics, Samuel Freedman has put forward a stunning refutation of the cartoonish view of politics found in much of the daily press.

Here is a world in which candidates connect with the fundamental aspirations of the people, in which political operatives take their inspiration from deeply held beliefs and voters still look to government to shape the kind of society they want to live in.

Author Samuel G. Freedman, a journalism professor and former New York Times reporter, is no naïf about politics. His compelling story of how three Catholic families made the migration from Franklin Roosevelt Democracy to Ronald Reagan Republicanism reveals a political process rich in cynicism, selfishness, manipulation, disillusionment, hypocrisy, prejudice and corruption. Indeed, it is precisely because he shows his subjects wrestling with these demons that Freedman's political portraiture achieves its clarity and luminescence.

Beginning at the turn of the century, Freedman chronicles the shifting political allegiances of three immigrant families as they embark on the distinctly American journey from working-class city neighborhood to comfortable suburb.

There is Silvio Burigo, the proud plumber from New Rochelle, New York, whose life was built on the foundations of family, union and bowling league. During the Depression, when his fellow plumbers broke ranks and took up work at less than the union's prevailing wage, Burigo held firm, often scraping by on $10 a week as a night watchman. And so thoroughly did Franklin Roosevelt's public-works projects secure Burigo's Democratic loyalty that he would continue to vote the party line even as new generations of Democrats went to court to force him to accept black plumbers into his beloved Local 86.

Then there is Lizzie Garrett, maid and housekeeper, who during the Depression was forced to pack up her family and make the trek from Manhattan's West Side to what was nothing more than a summer shack along the Hudson River in Crotonville, New York There she took in sewing and brought a Tammany-like knack and enthusiasm to the task of turning the Republican political establishment out of Westchester County and ushering in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

Perhaps most interesting of all was Joseph Obrycki, who survived the Depression and learned the art of community organizing by making book in the back of the family's bar and restaurant in Baltimore. Years later, his intimate connections to that city's corrupt Democratic machine would be confirmed when a subpoena arrived from the U.S. Senate's Kefauver Commission, which was looking into organized crime.

WHILE BURIGO, Garrett and Obrycki could instill in their offspring a strong work ethic, a pride of place, and an abiding interest in politics, they also passed on a stubborn streak of independence that in later generations would express itself in an angry rejection of liberal Democratic politics. Through his political connections, Burigo secured a janitor's job for his son-in-law, Frank Trotta, at a local housing project — and in the process exposed the extended Trotta family to the breakdown of family and civic life that to them seemed to flow from the Democratic welfare state.

Up in Crotonville, Garrett's son, a grave digger and amateur fisherman, received his political baptism in the murky waters of the environmental movement. Richie Garrett soon found himself at odds with the local building-trades union and increasingly drawn to the kind of liberal Republicanism that, in New York state, stood for clean water and clean government.



ILLUSTRATION: RANDALL ENOS

Fear of crime, a distaste for her father's illegal rackets, and a husband's corporate career took Vilma Obrycki Maeby and her family out of Baltimore to the white-bread suburbs of upstate New York. There the Maebys fell in with refugees from another corrupt political organization — Dan O'Connell's Democratic machine in Albany — even as they themselves benefited from rapid expansion of Republican Governor Nelson Rockefeller's governmental empire. So thoroughly did the Maeby family take up the suburban ideal that when the cultural revolution swept through the university campuses in the early 1970s, young Leslie Maeby rejected it.

The three stories finally come together in 1994, in the upset defeat of New York Governor Mario Cuomo, the modern embodiment of Roosevelt's Democratic legacy. Traced over decades and against the background of local and national history, these familial conversions enable Freedman to document the shift in the center of gravity of American politics — from Democratic to Republican, from urban to suburban, from liberal to conservative. Freedman's writing is often superb. And thanks to prodigious research, the individual stories are rich in anecdotal detail — such as the 1890 wage scale that put the value of Italian labor at $1.15 per hour and that of "coloreds" at $1.25.

Not since Common Ground, J. Anthony Lukas's Pulitzer Prize-winning story of Boston's busing fiasco, has any book so successfully captured the sweep of political history in the lives of ordinary citizens.

Slipping Over the Edge

Dennis Drabelle

ICEFIELDS
By Thomas Wharton
Washington Square Press.
Paperback. 274pp. $12

THIS beautifully written first novel by a young Canadian is a man-meets-ice story. Icefields begins with an 1898 expedition to the Arcturus Glacier, which is modeled after the Athabaska Glacier in the Canadian Rockies between Banff and Jasper. Poking around a crevasse, expedition member Dr. Edward (Ned) Byrne slips over the edge and wedges himself upside down, in the process breaking his collarbone and glimpsing a great winged creature in the ice.

Rescued promptly, Ned mends physically but afterwards is never the same in his mind. He returns to his medical practice in England, but the ice won't let him go. His practice dries up; his engagement ends; he fears for his sanity because at times he doubts he even went on the trek, let alone saw the winged figure. When he returns to Jasper Township, it has become the hub of a park (at first provincial, later national), a rail link is being planned, and one of his fellow expedition members, Frank Trask, is promoting bottled glacier water, guided tours of the icefields, and a chalet for paying guests.

Jasper's new residents also include Hal Rawson, who guides tourists up onto the glacier; Elspeth Fletcher, who works in Trask's chalet; and Freya Becker, a travel writer and seductress. While the others make money off the ice, Ned merely lives with it, taking notes, observing the glacier's gradual retreat uphill due to melting, becoming expert in its stages and stunts, even building a cabin on top of it and moving in. "Glacial ice is not a liquid," he writes in his journal, "nor is it a solid. It flows like lava, like melting wax, like honey. Supple glass. Fluid stone."

Icefields is by no means without plot. Hal and Freya become lovers, as do Ned and Elspeth. A leading character falls to her death. Trask finally realizes his dream of introducing "motorized snow-coaches" that take tourists for a ride on the ice. An avant-garde composer introduces his new opus on a peak above the ice and inflicts a spectacular doom on the piano by pushing it over the edge (found later by summer hikers, the ivory keys "are mistaken for the teeth of mammoths").

But mostly the novel is about the love affair between Ned and the ice, conveyed in the author's evocative prose. Ned notices phenomena overlooked by other Jasperites, such as that "the branches of the trees near the [glacier's] terminus all grow to one side of the trunk, away from the knife wind blowing off the ice."

OUT ON the ice for days on end, he spots glacial events that no one else sees at all: "Byrne watches for three days as an architectural wonder is created. The glacier groans, cracks, thunders, and rears up a cathedral . . . When the sun breaks through the cloud, the cathedral fills with light. The warmer air hollows it into a more baroque, flamboyant shape. Spires, archways, gargoyles, begin to flow. Waterfalls set festive ice bells ringing."

Wharton also has a gift for enjoyably offbeat dialogue. Here's an exchange between Ned and Elspeth:

— Tell me something about your father.

— Oh, he's a fierce man. When my brother and I would fight, he had a truly horrible punishment for us.

— What was it?

— He made us hold hands and sing.

Icefields contains an anachronism or two. Asked by Trask to manage the chalet, Elspeth replies with an idiom from today, not 80 or 90 years ago, telling him she would "get back to him within a week." And it seems odd that in 1898 people in provincial Alberta know instantly what's wrong with Ned (besides that broken collarbone) after his fall: hypothermia. Fourteen years later, the Titanic passengers who resorted to life preservers were pronounced dead by drowning, despite having no water in their lungs, because the concept of hypothermia was unknown to medical science.

These quibbles aside, Wharton has ably captured the turn-of-the-century feel of rural Canada, complete with boosterism, a Victorian adventuress, and teahouses in the wilderness.

Paperbacks

Non-fiction

WRITTEN BY HERSELF VOLUME II: Women's Memoirs from Britain, Africa, Asia, and the United States, edited by Jill Ker Conway (Vintage, $16).

THIS second collection follows in the wake of its acclaimed predecessor, which focused on the life stories of American women. This volume comprises work from 14 contributors representing three generations and four continents. Conway, herself a noted memoirist (The Road from Coorain appeared in 1989, True North followed in 1994), has assembled a diverse group of authors, many of them notable in various genres, including Isak Dinesen, Gloria Wade-Gayles and Vivian Gornick. In her well-considered introduction, Conway describes her choices as governed by "the effort to see the resonance of great events in different parts of the world, the similarities and differences in experience shaped by environment and history, and by the authors' capacity to convey place, politics, passion, and inner life."

NEGRO: An Anthology, collected and edited by Nancy Cunard (Continuum, $39.50).

WHEN this landmark collection first appeared in 1934, it contained approximately 250 pieces — many with pictures and illustrations — enough poems, essays and articles to fill nearly 900 pages. Cunard's goal, Hugh Ford writes in his introduction, was "no less than a comprehensive history of the cultural, social, political and artistic achievements of the black people of the world." Ford has edited and abridged Cunard's original document down to a still-hefty 460 pages. His criteria for selection included the historical importance of the piece; its value as commentary on contemporary racial developments; its particular relevance to racial problems in the United States; its availability; and its quality as writing of a general interest. All of the poetry made the cut, including such durable voices as Sterling Brown, Langston Hughes and Georgia Douglas Johnson. More notable than Cunard's prescience was her international focus. Writings from and about continental Africa comprised some 315 pages of the original text, along with 60 pages devoted to black life and thought in Europe.

OVERSTORY: Zero: Real Life in Timber Country, by Robert Leo Heilman (Sasquatch, $14.95).

ROBERT LEO Heilman has worked as a logger but calls himself an "aging hippy." He lives in small-town Oregon, provides regional commentary on public radio, and has written this book to consider the "strengths and weaknesses" of his community, especially concerning the issue of logging old-growth forest. "The stereotypes of 'preservationists' and 'timber barons' have just enough truth in them to reinforce the images. Some mill owners really are greedy, some mill workers and loggers are truly ignorant and brutal, some environmentalists are in fact utterly insensitive to the needs of blue-collar workers. But these individuals are actually rare . . . Industrial and environmental extremists are actually much more similar to each other than they are to the moderates within their own camps."

Students face flexible future

A study of the flexible US degree system could lead to a radical shake-up in Britain, says **James Meikle**



ILLUSTRATION: IVAN ALLEN

HUGE numbers of British undergraduates could do half their degree in local further education colleges under proposals being considered by the Dearing review of higher education.

They would spend up to two years on smaller home-town campuses, often reading for new "associate degree" qualifications, before transferring to universities or leaving to seek employment.

The change to a "2 plus 2" system would mean that expansion could be quickly resumed without huge extra maintenance and tuition bills, as well as boosting local economies, according to a growing lobby for a radical shake-up in the structure of Britain's universities and colleges.

They argue that the doubling in the university student population in the past 10 years has failed to deliver variety in sub-degree courses, despite the growing need for skilled technicians. Numbers of students following them have hardly changed, while those on first-degree courses have more than doubled, and postgraduate courses, especially those involving little research, have more than trebled.

A Dearing team of four is in the United States to examine the university and college system, where local community and vocational-technical colleges offer two-year associate degrees and other courses, while providing access routes to state and private universities, which offer a mix of four-year bachelor degrees, masters' postgraduate degrees completed in up to two years, and doctoral degrees that can take seven years.

The team of four is investigating students' entry requirements for both associate and bachelor degrees, transfer arrangements between institutions offering two- and four-year courses, the breadth and depth of the curriculum and students' success rates on different programmes, and the attitude of employers to the different qualifications.

Decisions on whether or how such a system might transfer to Britain are still some months off, and recommendations will not go to the Government until after the general election.

A uniform pattern is unlikely to be imposed in the British system, but with research funding going to a shrinking number of "Ivy League" universities, there will be pressure on universities, colleges and schools throughout the UK to initate more formal American-style links.

Many universities would probably continue to teach undergraduates throughout the three- and four-year undergraduate degrees, which political parties will not want to see lengthened. But a "2 plus 2" system would both allow more courses that prepared students for traditional honours' degrees and cater for the growing number of taught masters' postgraduate courses.

Universities concerned about losing a whole tranche of traditional first-year students may be persuaded that expansion will mean that more students who are better prepared for advanced study will be passing through.

In Britain, public spending per higher education student, including student support, teaching, research and capital costs, comes to about £6,680, compared with £2,700 per further education student, excluding capital costs.

FE colleges have been expanding by at least 6 per cent a year over the past five years. Those in England alone have 3.5 million students. Although only 5 per cent are on higher education courses, the number, 190,000, including franchised arrangements, is fast catching up with the figure for those on non-degree courses in the whole of the UK higher education system. It also represents more than the entire student population in universities before the post-Robbins expansion.

The beguiling message from the lobbyists for change insists that the next wave of expansion will be about standards, not demarcation disputes, and flexibility of delivery and study rather than permanent attendance at lectures and seminars.

They talk about opportunity, not threat. They can point to political interest in more variety of menu, the Treasury concern about the steeply mounting costs of supporting students living away from home, and Labour's recent frank assertion that "the possibility of a year of study at the home university followed by the completion of the course at the appropriate university of the student's choice, can reduce pressure on scarce accommodation and keep maintenance costs down".

The campaigners also promise that they want to build on existing strengths in the further education sector. Only 3 per cent of work is geared towards degrees, yet 300 of the 450 English FE colleges have some higher courses, 90 have more than 500 students on such courses, and 40 have more than 1,000.

No one would argue the US system offers a perfect model. Students generally get less maintenance help and face fees even if the division between private and public universities and colleges is not as stark as it might appear, because of the multiplicity of state and federal support through loans, grants and scholarships that accompany individual students wherever they go.

Indeed, there is concern among American academics that fewer undergraduates are completing bachelor programmes in four years because they do so much part-time work to supplement their supposed full-time study.

Doubters will point to the patchiness of provision, if not standards, in existing higher education courses on offer in further education. They suggest too much emphasis on this new route could force potential students on to courses they did not want to do or would not be suitable for. Enthusiasts, who point out the FE sector already has more 16-19 students than traditional state sixth forms, say that now the borders have blurred at one end of their intake spectrum, they can be blurred more throughout students' lifespan. A sea-change in attitude from higher education will bring the will to fill in the gaps.

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South Pacific (Vanuatu)	Law Clinic Supervisor	W45364

Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; ASP - Assistant Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer; AL - Associate Lecturer

For further details of any of the above staff vacancies please contact the Appointments Department, ACU, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (Internat. tel. +44 171 813 3024 (24 hour answerphone); fax +44 171 813 3056; e-mail: appts@acu.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s).
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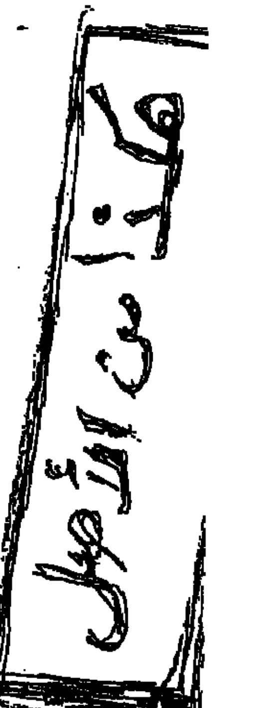
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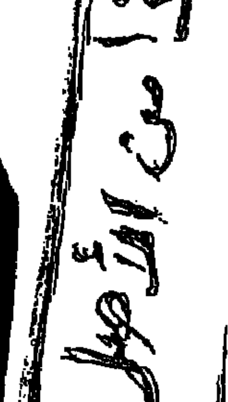
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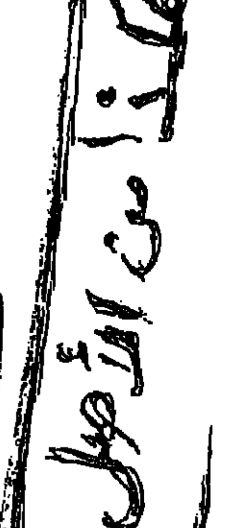
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Straws in the wind for radical change

Whoever is elected US president this week will have to come up with a new economic approach, argues **Larry Elliott**

THE 20th century has belonged to America in the way that the 19th century belonged to Britain. And, just as the last years of the Victorian era were marked by arrogance mixed with self-doubt in London, so the approach of the millennium is a time for reassessment in Washington.

America's pre-eminence has been overwhelming. After sucking in immigrants, manufactured goods and ideas in the first hundred years after the Declaration of Independence, it has subsequently exported its culture, its military strength and the fruits of its relentless inventiveness.

For Britain, America is pivotal. The "special relationship" has always been something of a myth, but the transmission mechanism of the English language has meant there is a strong bond. Whatever happens in America tends to happen, after a suitable time lag, in Britain. From rock 'n' roll to monetarism, from fast food to out-of-town shopping malls, where America leads, Britain follows.

Both main parties in Britain recognise this influence. Labour was jubilant when Bill Clinton won in 1992, the first Democratic presidential victory in 16 years seemingly pointing the way to a new pragmatic form of left-of-centre politics. Similarly, the 1994 Republican landslide was lauded by the free-market right as a sign that the West was turning its back on Big Government.

Since his nadir in 1994, Mr Clinton has bounced back. The fear that the Republicans aim to slash Medicare and Medicaid, and Newt Gingrich's decision last year to close down the government have turned the Clinton presidency around. He now looks the epitome of centrist moderation set against the wild men of the right.

But the anger and bewilderment that two years ago brought Mr Gingrich to prominence have not disappeared. Many Americans are working harder simply to maintain living standards. Between 1973 and 1992, for the bottom 80 per cent, the wages of full-time male workers fell. Only the top 20 per cent saw their real incomes rise, while the bottom 40 per cent saw their pay in real terms slump by more than 20 per cent.

Household incomes fell by far less, because more women were entering the workforce and their real incomes were rising. However, since 1992, for all but an élite, real incomes of women have been falling as well. The conversion of well-paid jobs into lower-paid employment is typified by median earnings of middle-aged men, down a third over the past quarter of a century.

An added complication is that future trends in social security spending do not look good. The cost of health care and pensions is set to rise inexorably, putting renewed pressure on the budget.

One way of responding to this combustible mixture is to rely on the American "can-do" spirit. To a large extent, this is what Clinton has done, although his *laissez-faire* approach has been adorned with a call for investment in human capital and the desire to harness the power of the information super-highway.

It could be argued that this is about as much as could be expected. As Harold Meyerson put it in the latest edition of the American magazine, Dissent: "They [the Democrats] weren't born for an age like this; they are (or were) the party of government at a moment when government everywhere is in retreat."

But there are already signs that more radical solutions are being sought. Unless living standards for the bulk of Americans rise, the even more centrist Al Gore may be under pressure from both left and right when he seeks the presidency in 2000.

Trickle-down has failed. Cutting the taxes of the rich has not boosted savings

Even over the past 10 years, Milton Friedman and the rest of the Chicago school of monetarists have not been having it all their own way. Over the next 10 years the debate is likely to intensify in at least three areas. The first is whether the US can continue to spend almost $300 billion a year — at least six times what Russia or China is spending — on defence now that the cold war is over. The short answer, particularly given rising welfare bills, is No.

Second, there will be an attempt to make the tax system more progressive. Trickle-down — the big idea of supply-siders in the 1980s — has failed. Cutting taxes on rich individuals and companies has not boosted growth by encouraging savings and investment. In 1980, the top marginal rate of tax was 70 per cent and the US savings rate was 8.2 per cent. According to the holy writ of the supply-siders, the cut in top tax rates to 31 per cent by 1990 should have boosted savings. But it didn't. The savings rate tumbled throughout the decade to stand at 5 per cent by 1990.

Allowing large chunks of the corporate sector to escape tax should have encouraged more investment. Wrong again. In 1950, when corporation tax accounted for 26 per cent of federal revenue, investment as a share of gross domestic product was around 10 per cent. Forty years later, the share of federal revenue accounted for by corporate tax was down to 9 per cent, but investment was still only 10 per cent of GDP.

What has happened is that the less well-off have had to shoulder a bigger portion of the tax burden, mainly through the flat-rate social security tax. Living from pay cheque to pay cheque, low- and middle-income groups have been unable to sustain the rates of consumption growth and personal savings seen in the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, the overall growth rate has slowed.

Unless something is done to revamp the tax system and redistribute the fruits of growth, America is set to be the scene of the decisive struggle between free traders and protectionists.

A new book by the American economist Ravi Batra* points out that, far from putting the brakes on American growth, high tariffs have historically encouraged expansion and innovation. Despite a doubling of tariffs in the 1920s, America enjoyed a productivity revolution and growth soared. The halving of GDP during the Depression was due not to the fall in exports caused by protectionism, but to fiscal orthodoxy, which insisted taxes should go up during a downturn.

For those eager for change, the portents are good, however the battle resolves itself. A century ago in Britain, free trade emerged victorious over protection, but the political fallout was an agenda for change that within 10 years allowed a reformist Liberal government to change the face of Britain.

*The Great American Deception, John Wiley & Sons, $24.95

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates November 4	Sterling rates October 28
Australia	2.0915-2.0935	2.0245-2.0264
Austria	17.52-17.54	17.23-17.25
Belgium	51.29-51.47	50.41-50.50
Canada	2.1990-2.2007	2.1660-2.1681
Denmark	9.57-9.57	9.39-9.40
France	8.42-8.43	8.27-8.27
Germany	2.4911-2.4929	2.4495-2.4521
Hong Kong	12.73-12.73	12.40-12.40
Ireland	0.9979-0.9995	0.9908-0.9927
Italy	2.501-2.503	2.451-2.455
Japan	187.30-187.50	184.08-184.29
Netherlands	2.7926-2.7945	2.7475-2.7509
New Zealand	2.3221-2.3252	2.2840-2.2871
Norway	10.46-10.47	10.34-10.35
Portugal	252.26-252.43	247.24-247.55
Spain	209.86-210.02	206.27-206.45
Sweden	10.86-10.88	10.59-10.61
Switzerland	2.0895-2.0911	2.0300-2.0330
USA	1.6455-1.6472	1.6116-1.6126
ECU	1.2982-1.2998	1.2773-1.2788

FTSE100 Share Index down 97.2 at 3926.1. FTSE 250 Index up 24.7 at 4416.4. Gold down $4.80 at $378.50.

In Brief

BRITISH Telecom is to merge with MCI, the American communications giant, in a $20 billion deal. The takeover would create a rival for US group AT&T as the world's biggest telecommunications group.

A BRITISH firm, Kvaerner Cleveland Bridge Ltd, has won a $165 million contract from China to build the world's fourth longest suspension bridge over the Yangtze river.

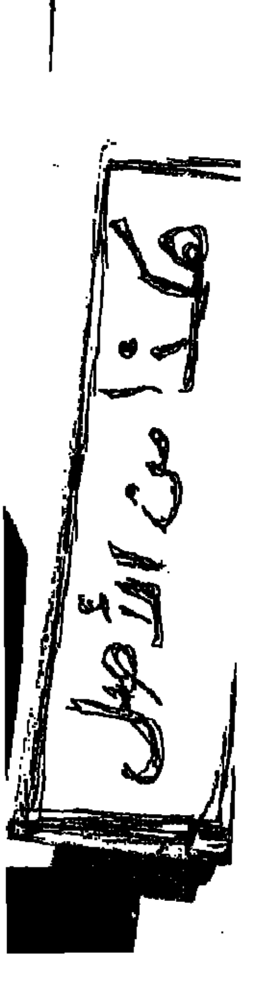
DIETER BOCK, who ousted Tiny Rowlands from Lonrho, has stepped down as chief executive of the mining and hotels conglomerate after selling his stake to South African mining group Anglo American for more than $400 million.

YASUO HAMANAKA, Sumitomo's former copper trader whose unauthorised dealings allegedly cost the Japanese conglomerate $2.6 billion, will plead guilty to two charges of forgery, say his lawyers.

A DIRECTOR of ITC, a subsidiary of BAT Industries, has been arrested in India amid allegations that the company illegally transferred money abroad and booked fake profits. Rariyamkandath Kutty was detained along with three former ITC executives.

THE European Commission has formally accepted plans by the French government to use $8.5 billion from the state-owned France Telecom to help it qualify for monetary union.

INDEPENDENT fund management group Invesco is to pay $1.6 billion for AIM Management Group if AIM's 3 million mutual fund holders approve the deal.



'Man who never was' finds an identity

John Ezard

ONE OF the lingering mysteries of the second world war — the identity of The Man Who Never Was — has been solved by the persistence of an amateur researcher.

The man was Glyndwr Michael, aged 34, a homeless, mentally ill Welshman who killed himself with rat poison 53 years ago. His body was used in a British Intelligence operation which misled Nazi Germany and saved thousands of British lives in the Allied conquest of Italy.

Only three men — one of them Winston Churchill — knew who he was, although the exploit featured in a best-selling book and a film, both called The Man Who Never Was, in the 1950s.

Now his name and his grave, under a false military identity in Spain, have been traced. They were discovered by Roger Morgan, a London council official and amateur historian who became fascinated by the mystery more than 30 years ago.

Mr Morgan said that he had spent "thousands of hours" in the Public Records Office, going every month for a decade to scan newly released papers. He found the name in a government document on deception operations. "It was an incredible moment," he said.

Glyndwr Michael was born illegitimate in Aberbargoed, Mid-Glamorgan. Unemployed, he moved to London and lived as a tramp. He was rejected for war service as mentally ill. On January 28 he ate phosphorous poison in a warehouse and died. The verdict was suicide.

His body attracted attention because the coroner knew through a friend, the forensic pathologist Sir Bernard Spilsbury, that naval intelligence was seeking a corpse. It had to be of a man in his mid-30s whose cause of death could be confused with drowning. Michael's remains became the centrepiece of Operation Mincemeat, a scheme to convince Germany that the Allies would invade Nazi Europe through Greece or Sardinia rather than Sicily.

Packed in ice, Michael was taken from Hackney mortuary, put aboard a submarine, then cast into the sea near Gibraltar. Chained to his wrist was a briefcase with forged official papers hinting at bogus landings. In his wallet were marks of a successful life he never had, including a snapshot of a fiancée. These named him as Major William Martin.

The body was found by a Spanish fisherman. The documents reached German authorities in Madrid and they thought the papers genuine. MI5 cabled Churchill: "Mincemeat swallowed rod, line and sinker."

Germany redeployed troops from eastern Sicily to Sardinia. The invasion of Sicily was bitterly contested, but successful.

The operation stayed officially secret. But in 1950 Duff Cooper published a novel, Operation Heartbreak, giving unmistakable details of Mincemeat.

Threatened with prosecution, Cooper hit back by threatening to name Churchill as a source. The security services decided to limit damage by publishing their version. Barrister and later judge Ewen Montagu, a key operative in Operation Mincemeat, wrote the book in a weekend. It sold 2 million copies.

Mr Morgan has been able to find the name of only one family member, Michael's sister Doris, born at Tafs Well in 1911. He is eager to trace her or her descendants and to see that her brother's true name is inscribed on his headstone.

Michael's grave in Spain carries the name Major William Martin

Letter from Uzbekistan Jennifer Balfour

Taliban reckoning

IT SEEMS as if we have just had a very close shave. The Taliban's dramatic surge northwards towards the Uzbek border has sent shock waves through Uzbekistan and President Karimov scurrying for meetings with other Central Asian premiers. Recent news coverage on Moscow television showed fanatics in Kabul shouting: "We want Samarkand, we want Bukhara!" and we wondered how long it would be before they would be lapping at our desert shores, threatening to imprison women and girls at home and herd the men to our recently opened mosques.

As with most international news it took a while to filter through more pressing preoccupations such as the latest dollar rate in the bazaar and the position of our city in the cotton-picking league tables of Uzbekistan. But once this usual wall of indifference was breached the reality of the situation began to sink in.

Distant relatives in Russia were earmarked for refuge when the time came, but those without a bolt hole could only watch and wait. Reactions ranged from shock, disbelief, anger and indignation. One friend began to plot the Taliban advance to his city. He decided that Bukhara would be the first target as the route from Termez, beside the ancient Oxus river plain, was more direct than the shorter, but more circuitous mountain route north to Samarkand. Once Bukhara had been seized, he decided, it was a mere four hours drive eastwards to capture Samarkand too.

His worries were not entirely without foundation since three years ago an Afghan mojahedin brandishing a Kalashnikov burst in on a mullah at the locally revered Sufi shrine claiming the Afghans were on their way. "By the autumn Bukhara will be ours!" he cried as he was overcome by police. They had seemed idle threats at the time, but the spectre of those words was returning to haunt us.

The roots of Bukhara and Samarkand are inextricably linked with those of Afghanistan. Centuries ago, when nomadic tribes roamed the steppes of the former Turkestan, those of Persian origin settled first. Communicating in Tajik, which some claim to be the original Persian, they formed strong cities and civilisations. Eventually rural Uzbeks settled in outlying villages and spoke their own Turkic-based language. The Afghan tribes never really abandoned their claim to these "holy" cities, wrenched from them by the Soviets. After Stalin's carve-up of Central Asia into five republics, the Tajik cities of Bukhara and Samarkand remained anomalies, well and truly embedded in Uzbekistan.

The hopes of many that the country's Islamic roots would sprout again after independence in 1991 have been partially realised. President Karimov treads a fine line between those clamouring for Islamisation and those for secularisation. The Islamic party itself has been banned, and shoots of fundamentalism are quickly nipped in the bud. But were he not at least to give moderate Islam some voice and appease the growing numbers of politically active mullahs, his power to control the people would be weak. New mosques open every week together with the attendant call to prayer five times a day and most Muslim holidays are now observed. But the new fervour has barely scratched the surface of pervasive corruption, extortion, alcoholism and ancient superstitious practices. The adoption of Islam is more a matter of national pride and solidarity against the former oppressors than an active belief system.

I HAVE NOT met anyone who would welcome a Taliban takeover, but no one really knows how many fundamentalists are waiting in the wings. Most students are cotton-picking at the moment, but those who have escaped the annual draft claim they will fight to the death, drawing for inspiration ironically on the very same book that is being used to impose *sharia* law in Afghanistan, the Koran. But few have read it, even less understood it.

Most people are reluctant to fight for anything. Salaries have not been paid for months and protests are ignored or punished. The result of years of direct rule from Moscow have made people afraid to speak out. They are used to sitting back and waiting for help.

According to our neighbour, if Russia couldn't help, America must. He had heard somewhere about a reciprocal treaty signed by the two countries offering mutual support in the event of a crisis. "We have promised to fight for America if they are in trouble. They must help us too; it is their humanitarian duty."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT is the ultimate irony?

THE one after the penultimate one. — *Dave Hewitt, Glasgow*

"*THAT WE* see death every day and yet live our lives as if we were immortal" (The Mahabharata). — *David Cottis, Putney, London*

THAT it takes a lifetime to uncover the purpose of one's existence and by then it's too late to benefit from the knowledge. — *S R Holland, Manchester*

SURELY the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Henry Kissinger. — *Kenneth Woodward, Wrexham, Clwyd*

HAS the evolution of surnames with their origins in occupations or place names ended, or can we look forward to one day being introduced to Mr Programmer or Ms Consultant?

A JEWISH student once explained to me how he came to share my common English surname. It appears that near the turn of the century, his grandfather fled Russia and came to England. With a surname the customs people at Liverpool found difficult to pronounce, they named him after his chosen profession. Who's to say that some information technologist may flee for his life and start a new existence in a new country? — *Lindsey Taylor, Morpeth, Northumberland*

THE surname/profession link seems to have thrived in India. Messrs Engineer and Contractor represented their country at cricket; Mr Merchant has had an impact in the film world; and, if my memory serves me well, a Mr Reporter featured in the recent Indian general election. — *B J Brownsword, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire*

IF I bought a second-hand Formula One racing car, what alterations would I need to make to allow me to drive it on public roads?

QUITE apart from needing first to embark on a massive programme of road smoothing (the bumps and pot-holes of most roads would simply break an F1 car), and a complete redesign of the engine and suspension (F1 cars are not meant to be driven at 30mph and to stop at junctions), it would also be necessary to fit lights, indicators and a horn. — *Jonny Popper, London*

Any answers?

CAN ventriloquists "throw" their voices? If genuine, how is the phenomenon achieved? — *Bob Heys, Halifax, Yorks*

HOW many people has the mobile phone already killed on the road? — *Dr F Burnier, Pampigny, Switzerland*

DO RAINBOWS, or similar phenomena, occur at night? — *Vera Burini, Westerhope, Newcastle*

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A Country Diary

Ray Collier

STRATHDEARN: The red deer stag was roaring from across the strath but he was still difficult to find on the high slopes above the River Findhorn. Then, through the telescope, he came into view and I could actually see his mouth open although the sound took a few seconds to reach me. His harem was close by — 17 hinds and calves — but they were quietly grazing and ignoring the belligerent stag. Two other stags were sounding out their challenge from different parts of the strath and it was likely that this would be as far as it would go — vocal protests in the rut. Edwin Landseer's Monarch of the Glen was a flight of fancy as a matriarchy exists in the red deer world, although just occasionally fights do take place. Then, above the red deer, nine ravens suddenly appeared. Playing in the wind, they rose up and tumbled down as if learning to fly for the first time. One raven strayed too far along a steep cliff face where a rowan was red with autumn colouring and suddenly, as if from nowhere, it was chased off by a peregrine falcon and made to return to the other ravens. The saying I know about ravens only goes up to three so I wonder what nine would mean: "To see one raven is lucky 'tis true — But it's certain misfortune to light upon two — And meeting with three is the devil." Ravens have always featured strongly in myth and folk lore and have always been credited with the powers of prediction.

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The Turner Prize is back, with greater public interest than ever. **Adrian Searle** scans the all-male shortlist

What goes around comes around

HERE we go again. The 1996 Turner Prize exhibition opened to the public last week at the London's Tate gallery in the run-up to the televised award ceremony on November 28. This year's exhibition features Gary Hume's paintings, Douglas Gordon's video installations, Craigie Horsfield's photographs and Simon Patterson's conceptual name games. It is a better displayed and more balanced show than in previous years, and while past shows have ended a week or so after the award ceremony, this one will run until January 12, undoubtedly in response to the affair's increasing popularity.

Public interest in the Turner extends beyond the handing out of cheques, and despite the drearily predictable gor-blimey-they-must-be-bonkers tabloid knee-jerk, it is clear that many people in Britain actually like contemporary art.

The vote for the prize itself is another matter. It is an all-male contest this year, which doesn't say much for parity, let alone the perceived achievements of women artists these past 12 months. And, as ever, the current contenders are dealing with issues so divergent, and working in such utterly different ways, as to make a nonsense of comparative judgments. Do you prefer bananas or Ford Fiestas, the Cairngorms or Persil?

Simon Patterson would probably enjoy such mind-boggling disparities, as his work is a play on concepts and definitions, objects and their names. At best he is as amusing as he is semiological. His key work here is the familiar London Tube map, re-cast so that stations and lines are named after footballers, comedians, saints and film actors: Mornington Crescent becomes Humphrey Bogart, Baker Street is Charles Darwin, and Green Park is transmogrified into Gary Lineker.

First commissioned in 1992, Patterson's poster was meant to be shown in the Underground, but was deemed too confusing for the public, though its effect would have been hilarious.

His huge schematic mural of the solar system, the orbits of the planets and comets around the sun laid over an eye-rocking, wall-filling colour spectrum, locates Nirvana, Xanadu and Cloud 9 among the heavenly bodies. An arrangement of dinghy sails completes the show, the appellations and boat numbers usually printed on the sails replaced by the names and dates of famous authors. Patterson, I feel, is the outsider this year. He has only one captivating idea, and that came to him while he was still a student at Goldsmiths' in the late eighties.

Gary Hume, just back from representing Britain at the São Paulo Biennale, is another Goldsmiths' alumnus. His iconic, ironical, wry paintings are utterly distinctive. In effect, he combines the accessible with the abstracted. He shows an image of Kate Moss with a burnished, blank head and an orange halo — a kind of latter-day, saintly Venus; a delightful reworking of a Renaissance portrait by Petrus Christus; a dancer's legs and feet; a brightly coloured blob of a snowman; a huge, extruded, nursery-coloured yet sinister rabbit's head.

Hume's paintings have an awkward, knowing innocence that is actually very hard to achieve. They have a kind of instant, belated Pop appeal, masking a perverse, inner complexity.

Douglas Gordon's 24 Hour Psycho, the Hitchcock film projected at a mesmerising slo-mo speed of around two frames a second, has become a key work of the past couple of years. Now Gordon is showing three new works. A video on two monitors shows an intimate battle between two hands, shot against some rumpled bed linen. The hands, wrists and forearms are the artist's own, one hairy, the other shaved. Fingers entwine and writhe. On one screen the left hand wins; on the other, the right.

The little films make one think of art-historical, pictorial rapes; of pink skin against white sheets; interminable battles of the sexes. Gordon's major work here, Confessions Of A Justified Sinner, uses footage from an early film of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde. Gordon's installation, projected on two large, free-standing screens angled against one another, dwells on actor Frederick March's excruciating and still terrifying back-and-forth transformations from good doctor to horrible Hyde.

THE MILLING crowds in a dance hall; a queue for the circus; a family of Gypsies amidst the dereliction of the outskirts of town; a couple sitting wordless, together yet apart, at a table in a bar; a sequence of portraits of anonymous personalities. Craigie Horsfield's ongoing black-and-white photographic record of Barcelona, the city and its people, is an attempt not merely to catalogue but to memorialise and analyse the city as a place and as a social construct.

Horsfield's project, in collaboration with Barcelona's Fundació Antoni Tàpies, and with advisers and groups in the city, has led him from elegant neighbourhoods to a run-down, city-limits *barrio* rife with drug-dealing; from cheap dancehalls to the parliament in session.

His portraits face back at us with an anonymous, estranged intimacy, a moral meditation on the complexities of European identity — what we share and what makes us alien to one another. Far from photography being a universal language, Horsfield shows that it measures differences, and the unfathomable psychological, linguistic and geographical gaps between us.

Horsfield and Gordon are undoubtedly the favourites in this year's show. In a sense, both artists deal with moral issues. Horsfield seems to be saying that, yes, there are such things as society and communality, while Gordon addresses the dark, weird stuff going on around and within us all.

The trouble with Patterson's work is that only the names have been changed. Hume's work has plenty of resonance, lots of charm and inner complexity, but I don't see it as the kind of publicly oriented art that will scoop the Turner. In the current climate, who cares wins.



Marcel Carné, and below, Jean-Louis Barrault in Les Enfants du Paradis PHOTO: FRANCESCA RUDOLF

Paradise lost and found

OBITUARY
Marcel Carné

MARCEL CARNE was the youngest and the last survivor of the generation of outstanding directors — René Clair, Jean Renoir, Julien Duvivier, Sacha Guitry, Jacques Feyder, Marcel Pagnol — who dominated French cinema in the late 1930s. Of all their films, it is that group directed by Carné and all but one scripted by Jacques Prèvert — Le Quai des Brumes, Hôtel du Nord, Le Jour Se Lève, Les Visiteurs du Soir, Les Enfants du Paradis — that for most people today symbolise a golden age of French films.

Carné successfully maintained the secret of his exact age (in his earlier years, his purpose was to disguise his youth when looking for work) but it is most likely that he was born in 1906, the son of a Parisian cabinet maker.

His father wanted him to follow his own trade; and a period of training as a wood carver seems to have given Carné his life-long concern with craftsmanship. Impatient to earn money, he abandoned his apprenticeship, to work in a bank, a grocery and an insurance company. The cinema, though, was irresistible. As a child he adored a magic lantern given him by his grandmother. Growing up, he spent all his spare cash on movies and



music halls, and took night classes in photography and film technique.

In 1928, a chance meeting with the actress Françoise Rosay led to his being taken on as assistant by her husband, the gifted Belgian-born director Jacques Feyder. When Feyder left for Hollywood, Carné became second assistant to René Clair, whom he did not much admire, on Sous Les Toits de Paris. On Feyder's return to France, Carné rejoined him and remained his assistant until 1935.

Carné's chance to direct professionally came in 1936, when Feyder left for England to direct Marlene Dietrich in Knight Without Armour, for Alexander Korda. Carné remained in Paris to direct Rosay in Jenny, adapted from a novel by Pierre Rocher. He chose as his script-writer Jacques Prévert, initiating one of the most productive director-scenarist collaborations in screen history.

In Jenny, Prévert, Carné and another future regular collaborator, the composer Joseph Kosma, gave style to a sentimental melodrama. Their second collaboration, Drôle de Drame, is much more Prèvert than Carné, a crazy crime comedy set in a fantasy London.

Carné's subsequent films, Quai des Brumes (1938), Hôtel du Nord (1938) and Le Jour Se Lève (1939) achieved unanimous acclaim and defined a whole era of French cinema, characterised as "poetic realism". The dark expressionist look of the films and the fatalism of their stories of doomed fugitives undone by love (Louis Jouvet in the second, Jean Gabin in the others) chimed with the mood of the Front Populaire and the ominous months before the second world war.

Unlike Clair, Renoir, Duvivier and Feyder, the monolingual Carné chose to remain in France during the war. The project of Les Visiteurs du Soir (1942), a costume fantasy set in the 15th century and relating how love triumphs over the machinations of the devil, was clearly a safer choice for the occupation period than a contemporary subject might have been.

The apogée of the Carné-Prévert-Trauner-Kosma collaboration was Les Enfants du Paradis, released in 1945. A fictionalised portrait of the celebrated mime Debureau, the film evoked theatrical Paris of the 1840s and offered a haunting allegory of the relationship and contradictions of life and art. The film's masterly, novel-style narrative and visual magnificence betrayed nothing of the difficulties of production, resulting from war shortages and enforced stoppages. With Trauner's astonishing sets, the great crowd scenes and the playing of Barrault, Maria Casares, Arletty and Pierre Brasseur, the film remains a monument of French and indeed of world cinema. Restored and revived recently, its magic proved to be undiminished after almost half a century.

Carné enjoyed his biggest post-war success with Les Tricheurs (1958), a view of hedonistic Parisian youth in the nuclear age, which now looks sensationalised and hypocritically moralistic. Terrain Vague (1960) was a more likeable but commercially far less successful study of delinquent youth. With his commitment to traditional craft and studio shooting, Carné became a prize target in the *nouvelle vague* campaign of denigration of the "*cinéma de papa*". His resentment of these young film-makers, whom he felt had destroyed his career, added to his bitterness at the events of the liberation period, stayed with him to the end of his life.

But the last years of his film career were not lucky. A comedy thriller, Du Mouron Pour Les Petits Oiseaux (1963), and a Simenon thriller Trois Chambres à Manhattan (1965) had no success, and after Les Jeunes Loups was hacked by the censor he repudiated it.

In his last years Carné remained talkative, tetchy and truculent. He felt that the French cinema's renewed success with big-budget productions like Jean de Florette and Cyrano de Bergerac vindicated his unchanging belief in the well-made film. He was given to iconoclastic views, even approving the "colourisation" of Les Enfants du Paradis as well as of his other black-and-white classics. "I like novelty," he explained simply.

David Robinson

Marcel Carné (Albert Cranche), film-maker, born August 18, 1906; died October 31, 1996

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Question time for Maxwell's friends

TELEVISION
Roy Greenslade

WHO says television is the fastest medium? It has taken five years since Robert Maxwell's death, four years since his sons were charged, nine months since they were acquitted and nearly two months since all other charges were dropped before we could see this fascinating, forensic account.

BBC1's Inside Story Special: Maxwell — The Downfall was riveting. Not because the story was shockingly new, but because it was being screened at last. Here was a visual record of corruption, a filmed record of the great and the good paying court to a fraudster.

The hairdresser captured his vanity in a sentence. The butler explained his extravagant greed. The chauffeur gave us an unforgettable portrait of a man on the edge of the abyss.

We watched senior politicians smiling with the incorrigible conman as they enjoyed his sumptuous 65th birthday feast: the oleaginous Jonathan Aitken, the faintly embarrassed Malcolm Rifkind and the ailing Harold Wilson.

Among these wonderful moments there was none better than the footage of Maxwell dictating his own publicity material while his then chief of staff, Peter Jay, hovers in attendance, the voice-over intoning: "Unquestioning executives helped to mould Maxwell's image."

For those in the know this was a stunning settling of accounts. When Tom Bower was writing his biography of Maxwell in the 1980s Jay harried him assiduously on his master's behalf. Now Bower was giving BBC viewers a chance to see Jay, the BBC's economics editor, in a new light. Truly, the BBC is a broad church.

One of Bower's greatest successes was in obtaining unseen film of Maxwell at the Jerusalem Holocaust memorial towards the end of his life. As Maxwell weeps while talking of his slaughtered mother and family, we cannot see his life as anything other than a cycle of tragedy.

But Bower's film should not be seen as a history lesson. Even now, so many people have questions to answer. By holding fast to *sub judice* rules while Kevin and Ian faced fraud charges, they were able to maintain their silence. Now the brothers are cleared it is time for them to help us — pensioners, employees, the rest of the City, Parliament, all of us — with our legitimate inquiries.

During the court case it was clear from both prosecution and defence evidence that the professionals should not escape responsibility for Maxwell having plundered pension funds. Bower urges us to ask the following questions.

Why did Coopers & Lybrand fail to spot that pension fund certificates were missing during their audit? Why did the legal firm Titmuss Sainer & Webb not question certain dubious property deals? Why did brokers and bankers give a man they knew to be dodgy the time of day?

Then there are the highly paid employees. Why did a director of Maxwell's pension fund investment company, Lord Donoughue, refuse to reveal Maxwell's activities, even though he quit because of them? Surely it cannot have been a £50,000 pay-off?

Why did Peter Walker, supposedly hired to become chairman, not reveal to the world that the company was in more trouble than the public accounts indicated? Surely his silence had nothing to do with his £500,000 pay-off?

Why did two Mirror Group directors, Sir Robert Clark and Alan Clements, wait eight weeks before acting after managing director Ernie Burrington told them that Maxwell had removed £38 million from the company?

Burrington offered one answer: "They thought it was for someone else to sort out." It could be the motto of all who came into contact with Maxwell.

It's a tribute to Bower that he, almost alone, has never left it to anyone else. And he fought tenaciously to ensure that the BBC lived up to its promise by screening this documentary. Now we need the answers.

Family affairs

THEATRE
Michael Billington

POLITICIANS preach the importance of family life: drama subversively exposes the reality. Three classic plays currently on in London by Ibsen, Shaw and Shakespeare all deal, in different ways, with the cracks in the family façade. But, in performance, it is **A Doll's House** that carries the most emotional voltage: Anthony Page's new production at the Playhouse is the best since Adrian Noble's and, along with Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, the most searing experience on the London stage.

A Doll's House is everywhere right now: it is also being revived at Birmingham and Salisbury and has just been staged at the Guildhall School in tandem with Elfriede Jelinek's acerbic sequel. This is partly the strange synchronicity of theatre. It also suggests Ibsen is dealing with a still unresolved dilemma: the tension between individual liberation and marital happiness. Politicians — and it was intriguing to notice Labour's Peter Mandelson there on the first night — talk of the nuclear family as if it were the answer to all our social ills. What Ibsen far more ruthlessly reveals is that, without equality, partnership and self-realisation, marriage is part of the disease rather than the cure.

Ibsen, however, presents the actress playing Nora with a problem: does she suddenly come to her senses and walk out on husband and family, or is her departure implicit from the start? Janet McTeer in Page's production unequivocally takes the latter approach. She presents us audaciously with a Nora who exists in a state of barely controlled hysteria: a walking bundle of tics, moues and nervous giggles, forever taking a quick snifter. The crunch comes when Torvald, in Frank McGuinness's excellent new version, protests that "No man sacrifices his integrity for the woman he loves", to which McTeer, in a state of explosive outrage, cries, "Thousands of women do!" Page's explicitly feminist reading leaves Owen Teale playing Torvald, very plausibly, as a patronising domestic bear: you feel he and Nora have a marvellous sex life but no emotional contact. But Page, and McTeer, are also honest enough to show that there is something inordinate about Nora: that she has a built-in death-wish and yearns both for her husband's professional and her own physical suicide. I even began to wonder, for the first time, if Ibsen's real heroine isn't Mrs Linde, neatly played by Gabrielle Lloyd: it is she who sacrifices herself for Nora's sake and persuades her friend to confront the truth. But what this tremendous evening proves is that Ibsen is still chillingly relevant to our own society: that as long as marriage is based on a lie, then political preaching about a return to family values is no more than a hollow sham.

Shaw, who passionately admired Ibsen, also subverted the myth of family ties: nowhere better than in **Mrs Warren's Profession** where the cold-hearted Vivie Warren disowns her brothel-keeping mother. On an autobiographical level this represents Shaw's rejection of his own mother and transformation of himself into a writing machine. On a political level Shaw also shows that society, not the individual, is to blame for the fact that women are driven to the prostitution racket by economic necessity.

THE PLAY, written in 1894, uses Victorian means to expose Victorian values. My only cavil with Neil Bartlett's intriguing production at the Lyric Hammersmith is that by updating the action to 1924 it subtly undermines the play's aesthetic: even the big climactic mother-daughter scene is Shaw's deliberately ironic inversion of Victorian expectations. But the playing of Maggie Steed as the smokily sensual Mrs Warren, Catherine Cusack as her brusquely dismissive daughter, a Thatcherite *avant la lettre*, and Nell Stacy as the gaily solitary Praed is so good as to make one overlook the redundant updating.

Family values also come in for a beating in **Hamlet** — a play that deals with fratricide, patricide, implied incest and that shows a father, Polonius, setting spies on his own son and using his daughter as sexual bait. But the chief interest in Philip Franks's modern-dress revival at Greenwich Theatre lies less in the excavation of family relationships than in the reminder that Denmark starts on a war footing (all military greatcoats and the sound of distant troop trains) and in Michael Maloney's exciting Hamlet.

Maloney combines intellectual incisiveness with blazing passion. This is not your pale, wan, moody Prince but a man so confounded by the sweaty haste of Elsinore life that he just never seems to get round to killing Claudius: reason is also countered by uncontrolled fury as in the scene with Ophelia (the promising Zoe Waites), ingeniously staged in a chapel, where he hurls the holy water and wafers in her face. Maloney confirms Freud's point that Hamlet is a normal man rendered neurotic by the peculiar nature of the task he faces. Maybe our Elsinore fixation confirms our suspicion that family life is a nest of intrigue and that the worst role models of all are those that are most royal.



Love and hate . . . Michael Maloney and Zoe Waites in a Hamlet full of fury PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL LIBBERT

Fab Four's final Come Together

BEATLES ANTHOLOGY 3
Caroline Sullivan

THE critical scorn attending the release of Anthology 1 feels a long time in the past, though it's hardly been a year. There has been a lot of revisionism since Anthology went on to sell 6.5 million copies, with scoffers suddenly deciding that its scrappy out-takes are interesting after all. They aren't, unless the thought of Ringo singing cabaret songs in Spanish twangs your thang.

But as the Anthology series progresses, what initially felt contemptibly mercenary is starting to seem worthwhile. Anthology 2's trawl through The Beatles' psychedelic years produced some remarkable finds, such as a version of A Day In The Life stripped down to its rhythm track. Such glimpses of the biggest group in history at the height of their powers more than justified the filler tracks.

So it also proves with the third and supposedly final compilation, derived from the White Album, Let It Be and Abbey Road sessions (1968-69). The Beatles' last three albums bore scant resemblance to their predecessors; the Lennon and McCartney partnership had by then deteriorated beyond repair and the four had almost stopped recording as a group.

At least a few of these 50 tracks aren't Beatles songs at all but stuff that would turn up on solo albums. Of these, McCartney's feeble Teddy Boy best conveys the bad vibe when it's interrupted by sarcastic commentary from Lennon. The songs that actually were group numbers also reflect the torturous time. Witness John, Paul, George and Ringo struggling to co-operate long enough to record Hey Jude, Something and While My Guitar Gently Weeps.

Sometimes, as on Harrison's Lennon-less version of I Me Mine, the four couldn't even be enticed into the same room simultaneously. Yet when they could, the rivalries were forgotten and they were still capable of magic.

These demos, out-takes and handful of never-released items are frequently acoustic. The simple arrangements are a stark contrast to the fully fleshed master versions, and often surpass what ended up on record. McCartney's psychotic vocal on Helter Skelter, to name one, is all the more disturbing for the bareness of its surroundings. Lennon's raw throat on Come Together gives that tune a charge the official version lacks. These are just two of the out-takes that ended up on the "do not use" shelf when they should have made it on to the albums.

Subtitle this anthology "Beatles Unplugged". It's an unprettified final shot that reveals them as real people who just happened to be musical geniuses.

The Beatles, Anthology 3 (Apple) £22.99

Sour Times

Alan Rusbridger

Full Disclosure
by Andrew Neil
Macmillan 481pp £20

THIS is a book which Tony Blair probably ought to get around to reading sooner rather than later. Not for the bits about Andrew Neil, which are interesting enough in an abrasive if occasionally Pooterish way but for the bits about Rupert Murdoch. These are rather more interesting, not at all Pooterish and rather disturbing.

Andrew Neil is the second Sunday Times editor to go into print about his former boss. Harry Evans was the first, after his high-profile break-up with Murdoch in the early eighties. His book, Good Times, Bad Times, was too easily dismissed as the work of an editor spurned. Neil, too, has been spurned. But while Evans never had a close working or personal relationship with Murdoch, Neil was for 10 years a political soulmate and trusted lieutenant. He, too, has axes to grind and scores to settle. But his portrait of Murdoch is, for much of the time, balanced and sympathetic — and ultimately more deadly.

What makes the account still more telling is the uncertainty as to how much of the full disclosure is deliberate and how much accidental. Neil begins by sneering at those who believe the "common myth" about Murdoch — that he "has too much power and influence [and] that he controls every aspect of his newspapers on three continents". Not so, says Neil: "His control is far more subtle." That would be moderately comforting if true. But virtually every chapter of the rest of the book dramatically contradicts this cuddly assertion, beginning with the very next page, in which Neil tells us: "Rupert expects his papers to stand broadly for what he believes: a combination of rightwing Republicanism from America mixed with undiluted Thatcherism from Britain." So how does Murdoch so subtly make sure that his papers broadly fit in with his world view (arrestingly described by Neil as "much more rightwing than is generally thought")? It seems to be rather as we chatterers always suspected: a mixture of cajoling, bullying and "calculated terror" ("he had a quiet, remorseless, sometimes threatening way of laying down the parameters within which you were expected to operate"). Editors who resist him are eventually either ground down or sacked. Politicians who displease him are cast into outer darkness. It's that subtle.



We learn that Murdoch "detests" John Major. That he admires Michael Portillo. That he "is determined to stop Chris Patten ever becoming prime minister". (Patten's strong line with Beijing has not been good for business, given Murdoch's ambitions for his Hong-Kong-based Star satellite. Kelvin MacKenzie, the robust former editor of the Sun, had to endure almost daily "bollockings" for failing to measure up. Another British editor suffered a nervous breakdown.

Though Murdoch reluctantly allowed Neil to back Heseltine in the leadership contest of 1990 it was not for want of trying. He relentlessly bombarded Neil with phone calls denouncing Heseltine as "useless and disastrous". When Thatcher was doomed he swung his support behind Major. Neil stuck with Heseltine: the other four Wapping titles all followed their master's voice.

Neil's defiance over his support for Heseltine was, he was later told, a significant factor in his eventual removal as editor. A more serious error was to have revealed the way in which British aid had gone to build the Pergau dam in return for a £1.3 billion contract to buy British arms, together with the associated sweeteners. An error because Murdoch badly did not wish to fall out with the Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, desperately worried, as he was, about his satellite interests in the region.

He berated Neil over the coverage, ordered him not to talk publicly about the story . . . and eventually moved him out of editing the Sunday Times altogether. Neil was later told by a British minister that Mahathir had boasted how he had demanded Neil's head. This, then, is the "subtle" way in which Murdoch controls his editors. They must be relieved not to be working for someone who employs less subtle methods.

MR BLAIR ought to read all this precisely because Murdoch — whether out of detestation for Major or a genuine admiration for Blair — is apparently toying with the notion of allowing some of his editors the latitude to support Labour in the coming election. To paraphrase a distinguished former Sun columnist, you couldn't make this stuff up. No soft-left Hampstead intellectual (to summon a rather worn-out Neil demon) would in reality have conceived of Murdoch as a proprietor willing to ditch successful editors to pacify tinpot prime ministers who might harm his share price abroad. But now we have his trusted former editor's word for it.

Andrew Neil, the supposed subject of this autobiography, emerges in a more sympathetic light than one might imagine. He was a brave, incisive and energetic editor in many ways, battling at the heart of many of the major political handfights of the eighties and nineties, not always on the wrong side. His Sunday Times ran many notable and tenacious campaigns. He ran important stories (Vanunu, the Scargill-Libyan link, Pergau dam) as well as some stinkers (the paper's coverage of Aids and Death on the Rock; its use of David Irving to translate the Goebbels diaries). It was both the paper's strength and its weakness that it was an embodiment of Neil's own prejudices, obsessions, blind spots and chippiness.

And such chippiness! Sneering references to Oxbridge and the Establishment litter the book. I counted 59 allusions to Establishments of one sort or another, whether English, British, medical, scientific, educational or Aids; whether upper case or lower case. What seems at first perfectly rational, even admirable, becomes in the end a tiresome obsession and a meaningless mantra. Neil at once relishes his "outsider" status while wining and dining with presidents, businessmen and ministers throughout the world. He flies Concorde, lunches with British intelligence, dines at the Reform, has his driver drop him at the RAC, skis at Aspen, and weekends at his French cottage — before once more reminding us that he is simply a humble Paisley Grammar boy with his face pressed to the window pane.

Finally, the book is notable for its sheer nastiness. He is scornful of the paper he inherited from Harry Evans and Frank Giles, scoffing at the "myth" that Evans's paper had been "an impartial recorder of events and issues". On page after page he takes care to denigrate the tribe he endlessly refers to as "my many enemies". Scores are settled with breathtaking brutality. Private confidences are gaily abused in order to trash a reputation here or stamp on some unfortunate who had once wronged Neil there.

It is a shame that the overall tone is so often sour, for it is an important book, with many insights about the eighties and nineties in British political life. Blair should read it and sup with a long spoon.

If you would like a copy of Full Disclosure at the discount price of £16, contact Books@Guardian Weekly

White House chameleon

Robin Renwick

Clinton: The President They Deserve
by Martin Walker
Fourth Estate 306pp £20

WHAT most people in Britain know about Bill Clinton is that he evaded the Vietnam draft, smoked marijuana (but didn't inhale), had extra-marital affairs, received Gerry Adams at the White House and at times has shown himself to be economical with the truth. How, then, did this all-too-human politician get to be President of the United States? On that subject, there is much to learn from this accomplished book by the Guardian's Washington correspondent, Martin Walker.

Readers will discover Clinton's rise to be a story of single-minded ambition. The poor boy from Arkansas managed to attach himself to Senator Fulbright, meet President Kennedy and win scholarships to Georgetown, Oxford and Yale.

Pilloried for evading the draft, he was in the company of the majority of his fellow students in doing so. As a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, he played rugby ineffectually, befriended his tutor and his college porter (whom he invited to his inauguration) but experienced a Britain palpably in decline.

At Yale Law School, he met a girl with thick glasses, brown hair, no dress-sense and strong feminist convictions. It was an unlikely but, from the outset, an intensely political match. As the youngest governor of Arkansas, he showed the chameleon-like qualities in evidence ever since. After one term he lost for having appeared too liberal — a mistake not to be repeated. From the beginning he showed extraordinary debating skills, a desire to please his audience and an ability to empathise with them.

Having served on the McGovern campaign, watched Carter go down to defeat and supported Mondale and Dukakis, he learned how to lose presidential elections and was convinced that he knew how to win one. Clinton, instinctively, always heads back to the political centre and, if it shifts, so does he. The idea was and is to turn the party away from representing those on welfare to those struggling to keep their jobs and pay their taxes.

Yet he became president as much by accident as by design. With George Bush riding high after the Gulf war, none of the Democratic grandees who might have beaten him in the primaries was prepared to enter the race. Clinton had more ambition and less to lose. At worst it would be good experience for next time.

The character issue dogged him all the way, exploding with Gennifer Flowers and his televised confession of "causing pain in his marriage", while Hillary stood by her man. Helped by Ross Perot, the aftermath of the recession and Bush's manifest lack of interest in domestic affairs, he won the presidential election almost by default.

As Walker illustrates, Clinton has always had, and has badly needed, a fair amount of luck. But it is not only luck. General Colin Powell declined to run when the race was winnable. Clinton waded through the New Hampshire snows when, on all the evidence, he had no chance.

As a result, he became president before he was ready for it. The brash and youthful team he brought with him quickly earned a reputation in Washington as the gang that couldn't shoot straight. Most of his Arkansas associates have left in disgrace.

Yet Bill Clinton has learned a lot, much of it the hard way, over the past four years. In his first year, he took the politically courageous and, in the mid-term elections, costly decision to raise taxes and cut the deficit. The result has been lower interest rates, higher growth and more job creation. He was in the end persuaded that the US must show leadership and commit troops to help bring peace to Bosnia. His overtures to Gerry Adams started as a gesture to the Kennedys, but turned into a serious effort to help in Northern Ireland.

The temptation is obvious to compare Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, New Labour and the New Democrats. As for the leaders, the personalities are very different, with Blair in his willingness to take risks and lead from the front more reminiscent at times of Thatcher than of Clinton. But between the parties the comparisons are close, as 12 years of Reagan and Bush forced the Democrats to lock their leftwingers in the closet, just as they were by the Labour leadership at Blackpool.

Blair would adjust quickly to being in power. But it would be surprising if there were not a re-run of the confusion of Clinton's early months as others struggle to adapt to the end of a long exile. Clinton has just signed into law a draconian programme of welfare reform. It may very well fall to a future Labour leader to have to do the same.



Right out of my mouth

Nancy Banks-Smith

The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations
Fourth edition, revised
Oxford 1,075pp £25

"ANOTHER damned, thick, square book" as George III said. Or the Duke of Gloucester. Or the Duke of Cumberland. Perhaps, as it is attributed to the three of them, they all said it. How dreadfully disheartening for poor Mr Gibbon. Though royals are rarely bookish, they often turn up trumps with quotations. Prince Charles gets in with his monstrous carbuncle. It is meticulously, if tactlessly, noted that Raine Spencer, his stepmother-in-law, had used the phrase "Monstrous carbuncles of concrete" the year before.

The thing is — how can we all get in? The editor of the fourth edition, Angela Partington, writes elegantly that any of us could be candidates for inclusion if only our friends could be persuaded to repeat the more felicitous of our utterances. When we consider our friends, this comes as a bit of a blow.

A shrewder wheeze is to play to the editor's preferences. I appeared in a book of quotations by simply observing that the surest way to catch the Queen's eye during a walkabout was to be a young, male foreigner in a funny hat sitting in a wheelchair near a boy scout. Prince Philip, on the other hand, preferred a nun with a periscope. As his mother was a nun, he may have a weakness for wimples.

Editors too, being only human, have their soft spots. Mrs Partington has brought many justly neglected women poets in from the cold and added a fiery admixture of feminists. She also seems to like a good singsong. Songs and hymns, thrown out of the third edition and their hats after them, are reinstated. They must feel like Chaplin's tramp, who was thrown out when the rich man was sober and welcomed back when he was drunk. Tin Pan Alley is back with bells on. Lennon and McCartney, Bob Dylan, Tim Rice, Porter, Berlin and Lorenz Hart.

Disturbing the deep peace of the library, here come the wisecrackers. Groucho and Chico but not, of course, Harpo. Frankie Howerd ("Such cruel glasses"), Frank Muir ("The thinking man's crumpet") and Gipsy Rose Lee ("God is love but get it in writing"). Actually, I always thought that was Gipsy's mother. It certainly sounds like someone's mother. And, ringing down the arches of the years with the clarity of an angelus, is Mandy Rice-Davies's unanswerable "He would, wouldn't he?"

One way and another, this revised fourth edition is just so much *jollier.* There was a gap of 13 years between the third and the fourth editions and what a difference a decade makes. You can hear the snapping of corset laces and the splitting of infinitives. Here is the most famous split infinitive in the galaxy, Gene Roddenberry's "To boldly go". To correct it is to ruin it. As Raymond Chandler said: "When I split an infinitive, God damn it, I split it so it will stay split." Anonymous as God, the editor of the third edition laid down a stern proscription. "It would be a vast and pointless task to record even the most familiar of advertisements, slogans and other catchphrases." This edition has advertisements, slogans and catch phrases in a new appendix where they all bawl away merrily like barrow boys. *Don't forget the fruit gums, Mum. Drinka pinta milka day. P-p-p pick up a Penguin. Go to work on a egg.*

Altogether there are three new appendices — slogans, quotations of the nineties, and misquotations — like treats for good children or lollipops as Beecham called them. Quotations of the nineties are quotes in quarantine. If these new arrivals survive, say, five years without foaming at the mouth, they may be safely loosed into the body of the book. Here is the dying Dennis Potter looking his last on all things lovely: "The blossom is out full now . . . and I see it is the whitest, frothiest, blossomiest blossom that there ever could be." Terry Worrall's wrong kind of snow. Diana, Princess of Wales, has "There were three of us in this marriage so it was a bit crowded" and "I'd like to be a queen of people's hearts." The Queen, who will always be cheek by jowl with Diana in books of quotations, as inevitably as E follows D, has her annus horribilis. She had a heavy cold when she said that and you still seem to hear the words through the snuffle.

Popular misquotations are subbed, sharpened and improved versions of an untidier original. No one said "You dirty rat!" or "Come up and see me sometime" or "Play it again, Sam" or "Me Tarzan. You Jane". But they do now.

This is the book which, though always marked Do Not Remove, invariably vanishes to reappear on desert islands. I would die without it. If one good book, as Milton said, is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, this is a blood bank needing, as each editor knows, continual supplies of new blood.

When I was a child we were expected to learn almost everything by heart. It was quite painless. I remember being only slightly disconcerted to find that the first sentence of Paradise Lost went on for 16 lines. I mopped up buckets of the stuff, good and bad, and can wring it out now like water.

As my father tapped barrels in the cellar before the pub opened, I used to hear him singing "The common round, the daily task will furnish all I need to ask" and the arches of the cellar made the sound as resonant as a church. The common round, the daily task probably did not offer enough because he would also quote from the now virtually forgotten John Greenleaf Whittier: "A longing she hardly dare to own for something better than she had known." And as he pulled pints for customers in clogs and caps, he would share Omar Khayyam with them saying, "I often wonder what the vintners buy one half so precious as the goods they sell." And what, for £25, can you buy that is half so precious as this?

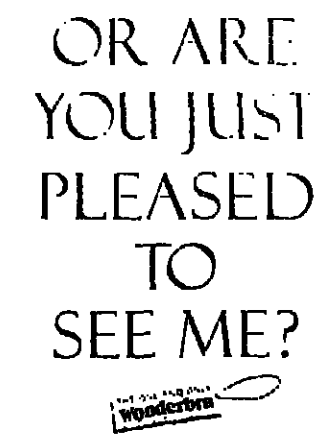


ILLUSTRATION FROM SEX IN ADVERTISING BY DAVID SAUNDERS (BATSFORD, £20)

Word imperfect . . . Mae West helps an advertising campaign. But what she actually said was: 'Is that a gun in your pocket, or are you just glad to see me?'

Swift wins Booker after leading from the start

Dan Glaister and Adrian Poole

GRAHAM SWIFT'S novel Last Orders opens with the words: "It ain't like your regular sort of day." Tuesday last week certainly was not for Swift as he won the £20,000 Booker Prize.

It was, however, the sort of day the bookmakers had predicted. Last Orders led the betting from the announcement of the shortlist.

Swift's novel, his sixth, tells the story of a day outing from Bermondsey to Margate to scatter a butcher's ashes at sea. In common with some of the other authors on this year's shortlist, Swift had been nominated for the Booker Prize before — in 1983 for Waterland.

Two "Booker bridesmaids" were again left at the altar at the ceremony at the Guildhall: Beryl Bainbridge, who has been nominated for the Booker four times, and Canadian author Margaret Atwood, who has been shortlisted twice.

The other shortlisted authors were Shena Mackay for The Orchard On Fire, Rohinton Mistry for A Fine Balance, and Seamus Deane for Reading In The Dark.

The title, Last Orders, doesn't come as a surprise. You wouldn't expect such a master of the terminal as Swift to opt for anything as upbeat as Opening Time. His first novel ends with a dying widower waiting for his estranged daughter (The Sweet Shop Owner, 1980). His fifth concludes with another widower whose attempt to kill himself has failed. You can understand a publisher choosing not to issue a new Graham Swift just in time for Christmas.

There is plenty of Swift's regular matter in Last Orders: that old-fashioned thing "the family", its griefs and scars and vacancies. There is bereavement, remorse and guilt. Bombs and orphans. War in North Africa and on the North Sea. A clock. Photographs. A moron in a mental home. Some gallows-humour: like the one about the hospital nurse who, literally, just takes the piss. Plenty of full stops.

Children are orphaned, adopted, abandoned, fugitive. Men are abashed at their own lack of manhood. And women? Quite a lot of question-marks, too.

Last Orders re-works much of this matter in ingenious ways. A dying man issues some last orders to his wife and old mates and adopted son. Jack Dodds wants his ashes scattered off Margate pier, for instance, and we follow the route taken by four of the mourners. Seventeen of the novel's 75 sections are headed with place-names, or the stations of a more sacred progress. Old Kent Road. New Cross. Blackheath. Dartford. And so on. Behind this journey there are secret histories and motives which it would spoil the fun to reveal. Suffice it to say that the dying man has another, more furtive design involving money and gambling. And there is more than one corpse and more than one farewell journey.

It may well be seen as Swift's best novel. So far. One hopes that he is already brooding again.

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Walls that have no ears

Paul Evans

FOR CENTURIES the lake villagers within these Bronze Age walls would watch the wild autumnal skies bring rain across the Wrekin to fill the reed fens, pools, bogs and alder woods of the Weald Moors. Within the earthworks the village became a farm, and by the 1800s the remaining wetlands of the Shropshire Weald Moors were finally drained by the engineer whose name was adopted by the new town nearby.

Telford lays siege to the flat peaty earth of the Weald Moors again, greedy for green field sites, nibbling away at the edges with factories and housing estates. And so the countryside, whatever that may mean, changes: shadows sweep slowly across a landscape stitched together with walls and hedges.

Within these walls Wall Farm recently played host to the National Hedgelaying Championships. Sponsored by Tarmac, that well-known protector of the countryside, this quiet landscape came alive with the buzz of chainsaws, the whomp of billhook on hawthorn, and the fiercely competitive rustling in the hedges of determined men with an ancient art.

Richard is having a bit of a struggle. Kathy gives coaching advice on how to wrestle with the Medusa's head of a snarled-up tangle he has to cut and lay at the appropriate angle. "He's only 16 and this is his first competition," she explains.

Further along, the hedge-groupies encourage their menfolk. "Geoff was champion three times and he wants to win again," says Chris. What's it all about? "The top prize at the end of a hard-working day/ As they show their skill of how to cut and lay," reads Chris's hedgeside verse.

Behind the marquees of ferrets, falcons and free-range sausages lies an incongruous looking heap of rubble. "Tarmac says it's granite, but I think it's black limestone, and anyway the grain's running the wrong way," says champion dry-stone waller Trevor Wragg. Trevor is from the Pennines and is picking up an award for his restoration of a dry-stone wall around Batterton church in Staffordshire moorland.

For people like Trevor, dry-stone walls are not only the ancient signature of human struggle in the hill country, they represent the very character of upland landscapes.

Here he's building a demonstration wall and talking to visitors about teaching the craft to stressed-out executives. He is bemused that anyone should find his work relaxing. "Years ago a shepherd or ploughman would stop and mend their walls. Now there's no one to do it, so they're all falling apart," says Trevor. "People come out into the countryside to take stone from walls for their rockeries." Trevor points to a rock the size of a cornflakes packet and says it's worth £5 in a garden centre. "There's big business in it."

In the week that the Council for the Protection of Rural England launched its campaign to protect dry-stone walls for their landscapes, ecological and heritage values, Jacqui Simkins of the Dry-stone Walling Association is sceptical. There are no stand-alone walling grants in England and Scotland. "In some cases, farmers have got grants for post and wire fences but not for repairing their walls," she says, "and in many places walls have been shoddily restored by 'cowboys' because there's no quality control for the real work, only the paperwork."

It will cost £3 billion to repair almost all the 70,000 miles of Britain's neglected walls. The Environment Bill is useless despite pleas for dry-stone amendments. "The people who make the laws live in the South-east where there are no dry-stone walls," says Jacqui. Meanwhile Eddy Grundy introduces One Man and His Pig, and beautiful dark clouds sweep across the moors.

Bridge Zia Mahmood

IT HELPS to have a reputation. In this year's Lederer Memorial Trophy, an invitation event for the best players in Britain and guest stars from overseas, my opponent credited me with a piece of diabolical ingenuity when I was in fact just doing what came naturally. Look at the hand from South's point of view as declarer in six clubs:

North
♠ K 10
♥ 4
♦ A Q 10 6 2
♣ K Q 8 6 5

South
♠ 9 7 5 3
♥ A 4
♦ K J
♣ A J 9 4 2

This has been the bidding:

South	West Zia	North	East
			No
2♣(1)	No	4♦(2)	No
4NT	No	6♣	No
No	No		

(1) North-South played a strong club system, so this opening was natural, showing a club suit. (2) Blackwood with clubs as the agreed suit — a useful convention, since a jump to 4NT when clubs are trumps is often unwieldy. Of course, if partner forgets the system you are going to play in some strange contracts, but North and South were on the same wavelength here.

I, who happen to be your left-hand opponent, lead the queen of spades. What card do you play from dummy?

You may think that it does not matter very much — surely the lead must be from queen-jack to some number of spades, so the king is dead and your slam is doomed. But there are certain possibilities.

First, East might have the singleton ace of spades. In that case it does not matter what card you play from dummy — the defenders can take only one spade trick immediately, and you will later discard your losing spades on dummy's winning diamonds.

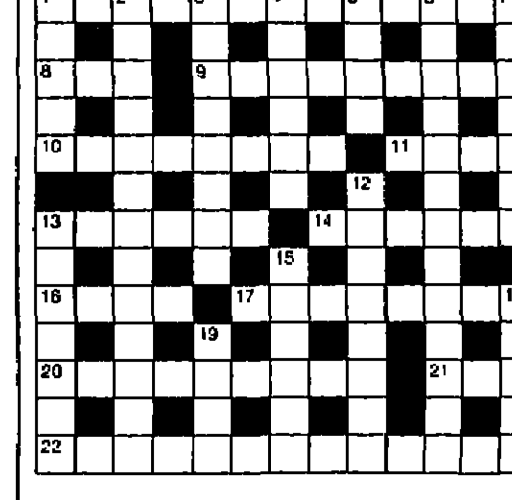
Perhaps West has the singleton queen of spades? Then, if you play low from dummy, East will have a difficult problem with six spades to the ace-jack. The winning defence will be for him to overtake the queen of spades with the ace and give West a ruff, but if he fails to find this play, you will once again be able to throw your spade losers on diamonds in the fullness of time.

Finally, West might have the ace of spades! Impossible, you might think — who would lead the queen from ace-queen against a small slam? But the lead is not entirely out of the question. North, a good player, will not use Blackwood without at least second-round control in all suits, so is likely to have the king of spades. The desperate shot of leading the queen could be the only way to persuade you to go down in a cold slam.

Have you played your card yet? South at the table paid me the deep compliment of believing that I had led away from the ace of spades. He put up the king — and he went down, because I had on this occasion done nothing more imaginative than leading my singleton queen. We'll never know if my partner would have been up to finding the winning defence if South had ducked.

That was the good news. The bad news was that our opponents on this deal recovered their poise sufficiently to win not only the match against us, but the whole tournament. Congratulations to Joe Fawcett, Glyn Liggins, David Price, Peter Czerniewski, Brian Callaghan and David Burn. ©

Quick crossword no. 339



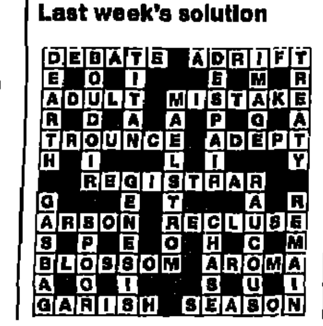
Across

1 An olive branch (5,8)
8 Insect-secreted resinous substance (3)
9 Member of secret order (9)
10 Soaked (8)
11 A long way off (4)
13 Straightforward — order (6)
14 American coin (6)
16 Poke (4)
17 Fortress (8)
20 Tyrant — poor press! (anag) (9)
21 Tavern (3)
22 Scottish beef cattle (8,5)

Down

1 Heaped (5)
2 Parisian tourist attraction (3,2,8)
3 Effectiveness (8)
4 Antenna (6)
5 US TV award (4)
6 Being well looked after (2,4,7)
7 High-ranking army officer (7)
12 Queen — falls in Africa (8)
13 Certificate of competence (7)
15 Famous film dog (6)
18 Nasal cavity (5)
19 Repair (4)

Last week's solution



Chess Leonard Barden

THE DEARTH of major sponsors for UK chess has meant fewer opportunities for improving UK players who aim to qualify for Fide ratings or IM titles en route to the much harder grandmaster award. Hastings and the annual BCF congress provide tough competition, but many players prefer to commute daily.

Regional IM events need only a small budget, and Newcastle's 40-player, 9-round tournament, financed with BCF help, was the strongest event in the Northeast for many years.

Kent's Danny Gormally in second place achieved a master score after defeating three established IMs, while the Northeast's two most promising young juniors, Martyn Jones, aged 11, and Gawain Jones, aged 8, scored against internationally ranked opponents.

D Gormally v G Wall

1 d4 f5 2 Bg5 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 h4 h6 5 Bf4 Nc6 6 Nf3 d6 7 e4 fxe4 8 Nxe4 Bg4 9 c3 e5 10 dxe5 Nxe5 11 Bxe5 Bxe5 12 Qa4+ Bd7 13 Bb5 Bg7 14 0-0-0 a6 15 Bxd7+ Qxd7 16 Qc4 b5 17 Nxd6+ Resigns. If cxd6 18 Qe4+ wins a rook.

D Bryson v D Bisby

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 f4 Bg7 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Bd3 Na6 7 e5 Nd7 8 h4 c5 9 h5 cxd4 10 hxg6 dxc3 11 Ng5 Nxe5 12 Qh5 h6 13 fxe5 Be6 14 gxf7+ Bxf7 15 Bh7+ Kh8 16 Nxf7+ Rxf7 17 Qxf7 cxb2 18 Bd3 bxc1Q+ 19 Rxc1 Qg8 20 Qg6 Resigns.

English juniors dominated the SCCU international at Golders Green, London, where the Surrey schoolboy Richard Bates shared first prize and achieved his second IM norm. In the tournament's quickest miniature, White angles from an early stage for a simple but highly effective bishop offer at g6.

J Richardson v A Pickersgill

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 Bxc3+ 7 bxc3 d6 8 e3 e5 9 Bd3 0-0 10 Ne2 Qe7 11 0-0 Re8 12 Bxf6 Qxf6 13 Ng3 Nd7 14 Qc2 g6 15 f4 Qe7 16 Bxg6 fxg6 17 Qxg6+ Kh8 18 Nf5 Nf8 19 Qxh6+ Qh7 20 Qf6+ Resigns.

The Guinness Book of Chess Grandmasters by William Hartston (£14.99) is a popular pictorial history of competitive chess, with nearly 300 games. It's a pleasant and easy read, which should suit as a Christmas chess gift. Hartston is good on the evolution of ideas and strategy, less assured on key personalities.

No 2446

White mates in two moves, against any defence (by A Ellerman). A brainteaser which won a composer's trophy and defeated many earlier solvers.

No 2445: 1 Rg2. If Bxg2 2 Qxg2 and 3 Qb7,3 Qc6 or 3 Qd5. If 1 . . . e6 2 Qf3! (not 2 Qxh3 Ke7) gxf3 3 Rg7. If Kc7 2 e6+ Kb6 3 Qb8. If Ke6 2 Re2 Kd7 (B moves 3 Qxg4) 3 e6.



Rugby League New Zealand 32 Great Britain 12

Lions given a mauling

Andy Wilson in Christchurch

GREAT BRITAIN's troubled tour of New Zealand ended in humiliation with defeat by a record 20-point margin to complete a 3-0 Test series whitewash. Terry O'Connor, the British prop, spoke for the whole team when he said: "I am embarrassed. I don't want to be remembered as part of the first team which did not win a game in New Zealand."

The spirit of this Lions party was symbolised by their captain Andy Farrell, suffering from serious leg and side injuries and requiring pain-killing injections of such strength before the game that the team doctor refused him a further jab at half-time. Yet the 21-year-old played for the whole 80 minutes.

New Zealand have proved under their own inspirational captain Matthew Ridge to be a fine team, but Great Britain would back themselves to beat the Kiwis with a full-strength side, especially at home.

Robbed of seven first-choice tourists for a variety of reasons, they performed close to their maximum in the first Test in Auckland, when they dominated the first half and retained a healthy lead until the sin-binning of Adrian Morley.

They also led for a large part of the second Test in Palmerston North, although this time there were no complaints about the 18-15 defeat. However, they went into this last Test with Farrell, Bobbie Goulding and Stuart Spruce all requiring injections, and Alan Hunte, Daryl Powell and Kris Radlinski defying medical advice.

And they scored first, Denis Betts claiming his third try of an outstanding personal series by exposing his Auckland Warriors team-mate Marc Ellis on the blindside on the sixth tackle. But their only realistic chance of avoiding the whitewash disappeared as they were unable to hold that lead for more than three minutes. The right-wing pair, Radlinski and Hunte, missed their first tackles of the series for John Timu to score near the posts.

New Zealand did not score again for 20 minutes but there was no doubt they were the more dangerous side. The scrum-half Stacey Jones eventually did the spadework for his side's second try with a searing midfield break that forced the Lions back on to their own line. The defence showed a first, worrying side of tiredness as the right centre Ruben Wiki dummied through to give New Zealand a lead that they extended to 20-6 at half-time through two breakaway tries.

Great Britain were threatening when in the 36th minute Goulding chose to run on the sixth tackle and fired a long pass to the unmarked Hunte — only for Gene Ngamu to intercept and run 55 yards to the posts.

Then another moment of Goulding invention backfired as he tried to hand-ball his own chip to his half-back partner Karle Hammond; this time Timu gathered the ball and linked with Ngamu, who sent Sean Hoppe over.

The Lions responded admirably early in the second half, and Iestyn Harris, surprisingly dropped to make way for Hammond at stand-off, made one jinking run from left centre only to ruin it with a pass to nobody. But Harris made amends with a well-timed short ball that allowed his fellow substitute Morley to crash over between the posts.

Spruce kept the Lions eight points behind and in contention with a remarkable cover tackle on Ngamu, but it was a temporary reprieve as the Auckland stand-off, who exerted an increasing influence on the series, worked a scrum move for Hoppe to step inside more tired British defence for his second try.

Ridge buried British hopes with a 67th-minute try, holding off four British defenders, but then marred the score with a display of the less attractive side of his game as he taunted Hammond and Powell.

Powell, who announced his international retirement before winning his 33rd cap, lashed out physically at Ridge and verbally at the touch judge and the Australian referee Stephen Clark. He was sin-binned and then sent off but returned for the last two minutes on the advice of the fourth official.

Rugby Union Glasgow-Edinburgh 19 Australians 37

Gavin takes the high road

Gordon Lyle at Anniesland

BETTER late than never, Tim Gavin set foot on British soil on Monday after missing the Australians' 1991 World Cup triumph here after being injured close to that squad's departure.

Gavin, aged 32, has been called up as replacement for Mark Connors, the Queensland No 8 who had been in line for a Test debut against Scotland on Saturday until suffering medial ligament damage in the closing stages of the tourists' 37-19 victory over Glasgow-Edinburgh at Anniesland.

With Connors and Daniel Manu added to an injury list that included Jason Little and David Giffin, the Wallaby coach Greg Smith is calling home for further replacements and arguing for tour parties to be more or less open-ended.

The best of Australia's five tries came just before half-time when stand-off David Knox looped his inside centre and then got outside wing David Campese for the touchdown.

Comprehensively outplayed at the line-out, Glasgow-Edinburgh could ill-afford self-inflicted wounds, but Hastings set up a try for Logan to keep them in contention until forward strength took its inevitable toll with late touchdowns by Manu and David Wilson.

● An outstanding performance by Mike Catt, with four tries in a 33-point haul, guaranteed Bath's appearance in the quarter-finals of the Heineken European Cup next week. Bath defeated Treviso 50-27. Harlequins and Toulouse were two other high-scoring sides. Harlequins trounced Caledonia 56-35 and Toulouse routed Munster 60-19. In other matches, Brive saw off Ulster 17-6, Dax beat Pontypridd 22-18, Wasps defeated Milan 33-23, and Pau went down to Leinster 23-25.

Golf

Langer . . . back to winning ways

Langer ends title drought

Michael Britten in Hong Kong

BERNHARD LANGER achieved his first victory for 14 months when he overcame a strong challenge from South Korea's Kang Wook-soon to capture the Alfred Dunhill Masters here on Sunday.

The German won by two strokes after a closing round of 65 at Fanling for a 17-under-par total of 267, with Kang (66) finishing a stroke ahead of the Australian, Scott Laycock.

South Africa's Ernie Els (68) was joint sixth at 10 under, Seve Ballesteros took 23rd place (73) and Colin Montgomerie finished in 39th after incurring three penalty shots at the 4th on his way to a 76 for 283.

Langer's first success since the European Open in Dublin during September 1995 was his first with the broom-handle putter he first used publicly in Paris eight weeks ago.

He amassed 25 birdies and an eagle on the greens where he won the 1991 Hong Kong Open and, had he not made a mess of the short 15th in both the third and fourth rounds, his victory would have been even more comprehensive.

Langer took six at the 190-yard par three on Saturday and on Sunday, with three strokes in hand, took a double-bogey five against Kang's two to lose his lead. On both occasions he found poor lies when missing the green and was unable to reach it with recovery chips from the clinging cow-grass. But Langer retaliated by holing from just off the next green for a ninth birdie whereas the South Korean found sand and was unable to make a par four.

Despite a near-miss at the 17th and a brave long-range effort at the last, Kang had to settle for the £33,000 second prize which ensures he will top the Asian PGA order of merit.

"My future could be linked to the long putter," said Langer. "It is only the fourth time I have used it but it is so different that it is good for me. I don't feel the slightest embarrassment about using it. You don't get paid for looking good or being stylish."

● England's Laura Davies missed a three-foot putt at the third extra play-off hole to lose out to the host country's Mayumi Hirase in the Toray Queens Cup in Inashki, Japan.

Davies, who started the final round four shots behind the joint-leader Hirase, had eagled the par-five 18th for a 68 while the Japanese birdied it for a 72.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Swiss rolled over

LIVERPOOL marched into the quarter-finals of the Cup Winners' Cup by beating FC Sion in a 6-3 thriller at Anfield last week to record an emphatic 8-4 victory on aggregate.

Liverpool went into the match holding a 2-1 first-leg lead over the accomplished Swiss side. The roof caved in on the visitors in a six-minute spell in the second half. Three goals, including two inside a minute from Robbie Fowler, flew past their goalkeeper Lehmann during that decisive phase to settle the issue as Liverpool continued to track the one European trophy that has eluded them.

Another English club to win decisively in Europe last week were Newcastle United. They brushed aside Ferencvaros 4-0 at St James' Park in their second-leg tie to progress to the quarter-finals of the Uefa Cup.

Faustino Asprilla, deputising for the injured Alan Shearer, was Newcastle's hero. The Colombian missed a number of chances before netting either side of half-time. David Ginola and Les Ferdinand wrapped up the game with a goal apiece.

But Manchester United's present slump in form — with their worst back-to-back league defeats at home for 60 years — dented their European ambitions when they were defeated at Old Trafford by Fenerbahce in their Champions League tie. A solitary goal by Elvir Bolic, a Turkish-adopted Bosnian, ended United's 40-year-old unbeaten home record in Europe.

Alex Ferguson's side now have at least to draw against Juventus, the holders who overwhelmed Rapid Vienna 5-0 in Turin, on November 20, and then beat Rapid Vienna in Austria on December 4 to finish runners-up in Group C and book a place in the quarter-finals.

Definitely out of the competition are Rangers, who went down 1-0 to Ajax at Ibrox. The Scottish league champions are still without a point in Group A after four games and although they have two more games to play, their interest is now purely academic.

ENGLAND manager Glen Hoddle's decision to include Paul Gascoigne in the country's squad for their next World Cup qualifying game in Georgia at the weekend has outraged women's group after recent reports that the player allegedly beat up his wife Sheryl in a Scottish hotel.

"Hoddle has clearly shown that football and winning a match are more important than the safety of women," said Julie Bindel, of International Conference on Violence and Abuse of Women. A born-again Christian, Hoddle said: "Paul knows he has to change in the long term. One of the prime examples that Jesus spoke about was forgiveness in the long term, not just the short term."

SAINTLY, an 8-1 chance, won the Melbourne Cup by two-and-a-quarter lengths from Count Chivas, a 33-1 outsider. Skybeau, at 50-1, finished third in the two-mile race. Saintly's win gave Sydney trainer Bart Cummings a record 10th success in the cup. European horses finished out of the reckoning, with Oscar Shindler, the 4-1 Irish favourite, coming in 15th out of 22.

IN TOKYO, 47-year-old George Foreman scored a unanimous points victory over fellow-American Crawford Grimsley to retain the World Boxing Union heavyweight title, while the 27-year-old American Tommy Morrison, who is HIV positive, recorded a first-round victory over Marcus Rhode, also of the US. Morrison, who had not fought since learning he had HIV, said he had returned to the ring to raise money for the Knockout Aids Foundation.

A TOTAL of 25 organisations had put in bids to run the planned National Academy of Sport — funded with up to £100 million of Lottery money — when the deadline passed last week. The new UK Sports Council and the Department of National Heritage will now draw up a shortlist of the candidate bids for the academy, which will have a central site linked to regional centres. They hope to announce a decision early in the new year.

GIACOMO LEONE, an Italian policeman running in only his fourth marathon, won the New York City event on Sunday. He was timed at 2hr 9min 54sec, with Turbo Tumo of Finland second and the Kenyan Joseph Kamau third. Kenyans also finished fourth and sixth. The last Italian to win the marathon was Gianni Poli, in 1986.



Leone: victory salute

SUSSEX have sacked their 35-year-old captain Alan Wells. He has been replaced by the wicket-keeper-batsman Peter Moores. Wells was appointed captain in 1992 but he failed to end the club's unhappy penchant for under-achievement.

In 1993 Sussex reached the NatWest Trophy final but Wells's tactics were blamed when they lost to Warwickshire, despite batting first and scoring 321 for six. His man-management also came under fire from other players.

LAND-LOCKED Switzerland is to compete in the America's Cup for the first time. Behind the challenge is the Club Nautique de Morges on Lake Geneva. In order to meet entry requirements, it will associate itself with a club that holds its annual regatta on the sea.